

SIDE LIGHTS  
ON  
SOUTH AFRICA

ROY  
DEVEREUX



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SIDE LIGHTS ON SOUTH AFRICA



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ON  
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BY  
ROY DEVEREUX

WITH A MAP OF SOUTH AFRICA

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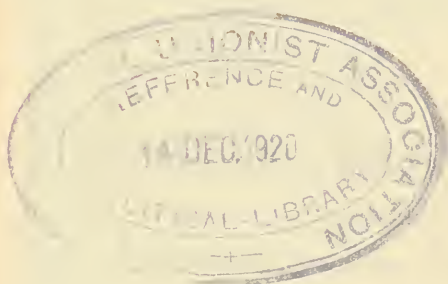


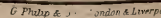
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# SIDE LIGHTS

ON

## SOUTH AFRICA.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### ON THE EDGE OF THE SOUTH.

It is curious how repugnant to the mind of the average woman is the mere suggestion of six thousand miles of sea. Even if she has outgrown the idea that home necessarily means a house, whose four walls enclose all the green years of her youth and the golden years of her maturity, the more popular corners of Europe usually afford her sufficient space in which to revive the atrophied tissues of her mind and her body. That spiritual phthisis, which only interminable journeying can cure, is fortunately neither a common nor a contagious complaint. Those women who do forsake the joys of the London season and the Rue de la Paix are, as a rule, dragged into the wilder-

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ness in the company of some man, whom work or sport impels towards the few remaining waste places of the earth. They endure it, fortified by the reflection that there is only one bourne from which no traveller returns. But in the spring of 1898, after months of wrestling with a worse devil than Dante ever met, whose name is Insomnia, I made up my mind that, for a long time at least, my own place should know me no more. I wanted to go to the end of the world, and look over the edge. I wanted to touch the hands of strangers, and to feel the wind of the desert in my face. And three weeks later, in the character of special correspondent to the *Morning Post*, I stepped from the deck of the Union Company's S.S. "Norman" on to the red dust of Cape Town dock.

As the boisterous waves of the Atlantic swell into the glassy waters of the Bay, one becomes immediately aware of Table Mountain, her flanks green and precipitous, rising abruptly out of the sea. Drawing nearer to port, the thin grey rim which is Cape Town intervenes along the line of sight, and one realises that Table Mountain dominates this edge of the South just

as Fujiyama dominates the coast of Japan. The morning grows slowly older, and the half transparent vapour fading from the heights reveals Table Mountain's truncated summit. Unlike Fujiyama, she does not aspire, for she has no peak wherewith to pierce the heavens. Over her flattened top the feet of tourists stray, for the whole of her thirty-five hundred feet are accessible to the energetic. No longing for the "Mother of Fire's" crown of snow appears to disturb her earth-bound tranquillity; thus, although Table Mountain is beautiful, even majestic, she is not divine; and I wondered as I gazed at her mutilated brow whether she was in any sense typical of the race that lives, moves, and has its being under her shadow.

Cape Town, as it crouches at the base of Table Mountain, is not in itself fair to see. It is in truth all unworthy of the rare beauty of its site and its surroundings. Possessing neither definite character nor even the grace of uniformity, its streets might be called the featureless offspring of that unholy alliance between the great goddess Commerce and the Cape Dutch, out of which few good things have yet come. His association with trade has utterly destroyed

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in the Afrikaner that artistic sense for which his ancestors were so distinguished, while it has developed a degree of avarice and dishonesty unsurpassed even in a Hebrew money-lender. Before he had attained that stage of commercial prosperity which expresses itself in sumptuous brick and mortar, Cape Town was built—stunted, straggling, monotonous. In the middle of the main thoroughfare, called Adderley Street, one is startled out of this impression by the intrusion of two gigantic stone buildings recently erected, and occupied by the Post Office and the Standard Bank. These incongruous structures seem to accentuate the negative character of the adjacent houses—two keepers, one might say, in an asylum for architectural idiots. Pursuing Adderley Street up its gentle ascent, one reaches a wide square where stands the Jubilee statue of Her Majesty, and the combined Houses of the Legislature, a not uncomely building of red brick and white stone, solid, yet kindly in expression, and circled by well-kept gardens. But the town itself gives no hint of the lovely suburbs that lie beyond it, connected now therewith by an admirable system of electric trams.

Carlyle, in one of the hero-worship essays,



compared all mankind to Saul, the son of Kish, who went forth to seek his father's asses and instead thereof found a kingdom. Just so men have gone out to that "temple of gold and of gain," South Africa, with never an eye for the beauty that is there. Most of them no doubt fly northwards on the wings of material interest, without staying to explore the beautiful environs of Cape Town. Yet the Victoria Road, which almost encircles the peninsula, is one of the most wonderful of the world's highways. As it curls around the shoulder of Table Mountain between Sea Point and Hout's Bay it is lovelier than the famous Corniche, more subtle in colour, more capricious in outline. One is reminded of the road between San Sebastian and Zaraus, whose aspect is however keener, almost sardonic; then again, of the coast roads that girdle the west of Scotland, where nature so often permits her tears to obscure her beauty. The hills are Scotch hills, one says, but the foliage with its flamboyant blossoms suggests the tropics. Then the sky, a stainless turquoise, and the sea, a burning sapphire, glowing in the hot winter sunlight, send the memory wandering back to the garish shores of the Mediterranean, defaced

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by toy homes for peripatetic human beings, white-walled, green-shuttered, and to will-o'-the-wisp casino lamps. Virgin still is the Victoria Road. As yet the jerry-builder knows her not, nor the profane tourist. And this, though cause for joy and peace, is also cause for amazement. Cape Town is too lethargic to discover that she has a site close to her squalid self, fit to rear an enchanted city upon. On an evil day some mine-weary speculator will look down upon the Victoria Road as Edmond Blanc looked down upon the Bay of Monaco, and that ghoul of modern life, the globe-trotter, will thenceforward make her his own. In the meantime she is inviolate and incomparable, with only the Queen's Hotel at Sea Point, the most comfortable hostelry in South Africa, and a couple of wayside inns to disturb her peace.

There are many other fair scenes near Cape Town for the eyes that see. Wynberg, a suburb more adjacent to the town, is a forest intersected with avenues of villas. One end of this wood adjoins Rondebosch, a lovely district in which all roads lead to Groote Schuur, where Cecil Rhodes is king. The new house, erected on the site of the old Dutch farmhouse that was



burnt down a few years ago, is not yet entirely finished. The architect has enlarged and embellished somewhat the original design, while preserving its early Dutch character. The spiritual significance of Groote Schuur is a picturesque intimacy, solid without being ponderous, simple without being rude. John of Olden-Barneveldt would have loved it, and so would those merchant-politicians of Amsterdam, who live eternally in the liturgic twilight of Rembrandt's Syndics.

The style of Groote Schuur is to the prevailing style of Cape Town as pure Dutch to that corrupted patois called the "taal." Its white walls and serrated gables gleam through an avenue of pines. The wood used in the interior is universally teak, especially selected for Mr. Rhodes at enormous cost, and on the roof red tiles replace the old dangerous thatch, where the fire is supposed to have originated. One enters through a door that is never shut, into two large stone-paved vestibules, connecting the *stoep* (verandah) at the front of the house with the wide terrace at the back. To the left lies Mr. Rhodes's library and smoking-room, small, teak-panelled, and lined with books, many of which

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are type-written translations of the classics, bound in scarlet leather. These were fortunately saved from the flames, as also the cabinet containing the curios found near the ruins at Zimbabwe, in Mashonaland. One of the most interesting of these is a wooden dish of immeasurable age, bordered with carved signs of the Zodiac, and supposed to be a relic of ancient Phœnician occupation. Lobengula's gun and his seal, an elephant proper, stand on a table near an autograph letter of Napoleon and a signed portrait of Lord Salisbury. The dining-room covers the ground floor of the left wing, a lofty room, also panelled in teak, whose long windows open on the *stoep* wide enough to shelter from both sun and shower. The view from it must be an unending joy. In the foreground is a series of terraces that mount the grassy hill, radiant with red salvia and golden with orange trees. Two giant cedars, standing like sentinels on the summit, throw a trellis of frail black branches across the background of the mountain. It rears its height in dreamy opalescence against the sky, which is always here the bluest of things blue. Such a prospect might even solace a soul weary of empire-

making. Yet Mr. Rhodes does not keep its beauties solely for his own enjoyment. He shares it with the townspeople, who are free to wander over the grounds at will, and the beasts of the jungle. A couple of young lions and a leopard, comfortably caged, overlook the wilderness of flowering sugar bushes, and on the hill-side buck of all kinds browse. Hard by is an aviary of gay-plumaged pheasants from many lands, companioned by a family of English rooks, who survey their surroundings with an expression of deep disgust. The ten nightingales which Mr. Rhodes brought with them last year refused with one consent to make melody in these alien woods. He who "thinks in continents" could not keep life in a nightingale. As I watched him mourning disconsolate over the tenth corpse, the sharp limitation of human power sent its iron into my soul.

Beautiful, exceedingly, is the estate of about twelve thousand acres at Somerset West, where Sir James Sivewright exchanges the maelstrom of politics for the peace of fruit-farming. To this corner of the Cape peninsula the earliest Dutch emigrants, trekking wearily over leagues of sand, gave the name of the "Hottentot's

Holland" as they pressed forward to take possession of that fertile paradise. What is not mountain, nor moor, nor stream, at Lourensford, is now a vast plantation where fruit trees of every variety, imported from every country in the world, are undergoing the process of acclimatisation. Orange gardens join shrubberies of hydrangeas and thickets of azaleas that cluster round the old Dutch homestead, as quaintly beautiful as a picture of Cuyp or Van Ostade. In the flower-beds English violets peep out beneath the whiteness of camellias and the flaming scarlet of the Cape honeysuckle, and behind stand the giant camphor trees, full of age and of memories, watching many masters come and go and the years and the children blossom and fade, emblematical of Nature's superb disdain of humanity.

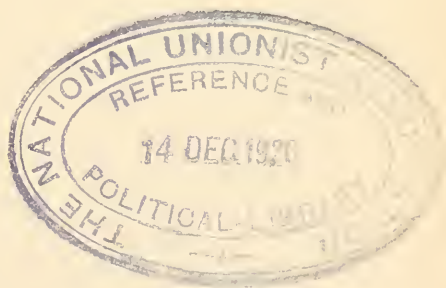
Her Majesty's representative is but indifferently housed. The square yet straggling building in the centre of Cape Town, called Government House, is comfortable enough, but could scarcely be less imposing. Its proximity makes the Governor much more the prey of every caller than if it were situated in one of the lovely suburbs. It was suggested some years

ago that the old house on the beautiful vine-farm of Constantia, to which Van der Stell, the first Governor, retired in 1699, should be converted into a summer residence for the present Governor. The proposal being unfavourably received by the extreme Afrikaner party was, however, abandoned. This opposition, inspired by no personal antipathy to the Queen's representative, only furnishes another proof of that racial sentiment so strong among the Dutch. In spite of this, time has certainly confirmed the favourable impression which Sir Alfred Milner made on all classes on his arrival at the Cape. He inspires more confidence than did his immediate predecessors. The English congratulate themselves upon his intelligence and courage, while even the Afrikaner feels that he will be just and fear not. If there is no conciliation in his heart, there is a good deal in his manner, which is suave, without being the least cordial. The hand is not of iron, but muscular and supple, though now the velvet glove is threadbare at the finger tips. In talking to him I had the impression of a great capacity for work and of a mind that is earnest, rather than energetic. The face is full of deep thought, serene, yet dis-

illusioned, as in one who is more weary of men than of things. Nature, one would imagine, intended Sir Alfred Milner for a scholar. It remains to be seen whether his reputation as a diplomatist will survive the grave that South Africa dug for Sir Bartle Frere, for whose genius he once expressed to me a profound admiration.

Will the federal union of the South African States, which Sir Bartle Frere was sent out to promote by every possible means, come to pass in the life of the present Governor? At the moment of writing, in the full tide of war, it seems farther off than ever; for only the form without the spirit of unity may be bought with blood. The chronic condition of unrest in the Transvaal has greatly tended to intensify race resentment in the Cape Colony. But events in South African history tread closely each upon the heels of the last, and in the course of ten years the aspect of affairs will be other than it is to-day. With a few notable exceptions, the selection of those men who have represented the Queen in South Africa has been singularly unfortunate, and to this cause many of the mistakes which have characterised the dealings of the British Government with the colonists

may be attributed. It is not very long since Sir Alfred Milner entered upon the difficult task of allaying these smouldering antagonisms, and the fact that he has brought not peace, but a sword, should not be laid to his charge. There are malign influences which are beyond the control of any Governor, however tactful and enlightened.



## CHAPTER II.

## POLITICS AT THE CAPE.

I RECALL with a feeling of gratitude the hospitable Strangers' Gallery in the House of Assembly, for most of the days I spent in Cape Town were passed there. It compares favourably with the pen at St. Stephen's into which women who desire to follow a political debate are packed behind a wire fence, presumably lest their too evident charms should distract the attention of honourable Members. In the Cape Parliament, however, the constant and obvious presence of ladies did not seem to disturb the feverish debate on the Redistribution Bill brought in by Sir Gordon Sprigg's Ministry, immediately after my arrival in Cape Town.

Those who can remember the ebullition of popular sentiment evoked by the English Reform Bills of 1831 and 1867, will realise what the effect of an analogous measure must have been in a country where three races dwell



together in a precarious amity which may at any moment be fanned into hostility by the breath of national or party spirit.

The Bill for the better Representation of the People proved to be the swan-song of Sir Gordon Sprigg's Ministry, although it was carried to a second reading by a majority of seven, after a protracted and acrimonious opposition. Briefly stated, the object of the Bill was to add eighteen new members to the seventy-nine which, inclusive of the Speaker, then constituted the House of Assembly. It must be remembered that there are in the Cape Colony three distinct, and to an extent contending interests—those of the farmer, the miner, and the merchant. The mining industry, being strictly local, stands somewhat apart and is represented by Kimberley and Namaqualand. It is the rural and the urban vote which actually divide the House, and it is this divergence of interest, stimulated into an acute antipathy by party feeling, which makes the Treasury bench so thorny and uncertain a seat. A redistribution of seats was, however, repeatedly demanded by politicians of every opinion. In the days when the Afrikaner Bond and the Progressive party lay down

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together like the millennial lion and lamb, the former association constantly supported the demand for a readjusted representation. Since the first Cape Parliament was constituted, in 1853, the population of the large towns has enormously increased; in the case of Cape Town, for instance, to the extent of over one hundred per cent. Yet the capital, with its 50,000 inhabitants, only returned four members in a House of seventy-nine. The seaports, with their increased and increasing wealth and number of inhabitants, were in the same case. Having regard to the accepted principle of enfranchisement on the basis of population, wealth and area, this state of things was neither just nor satisfactory. It should also be borne in mind that in the Cape Colony the interests of the small remote townships and the country are practically identical. On such important questions as native policy and education there is no sharp division of opinion. Further, while the population of the country districts is almost stationary, that of the towns will continue to enlarge, so that each year the balance of representation must be more obviously in favour of the former. Nevertheless Sir Gordon Sprigg's

party was not destined to enjoy for long its doubtful triumph of seven, for, two days after its test measure was carried to its second reading, the Government was defeated by four votes on a motion of No Confidence. So, before the end of June, 1899, the shutters went up at the House of Assembly, and each member went back to his constituents to give an account of his stewardship.

As an impartial observer I could not, however, escape the conviction that the bitter opposition to Sir Gordon Sprigg's Redistribution Bill did not spring exclusively from the fear, genuine as it undoubtedly was in some cases, that the agricultural community would suffer thereby. And this conviction has been justified by the fact that about six months later Mr. Schreiner, at the head of a Bond Ministry, brought forward and passed a similar measure. It differed from the original Bill only in the manner in which the eighteen new members were distributed among the constituencies ; for the additional representation then granted to the towns was more than counterbalanced by the formation of new electoral divisions, in which the country vote predominated to an

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extent which made the return of Bond candidates practically a foregone conclusion.

... It became fairly obvious during the debate of June 1898, that if the Right Honourable member for Barkly West had not tacitly declared himself in support of the measure, the then Opposition would never have resorted to the extreme expedient of trying to oust the Government by a motion of No Confidence. The direct personal attack which I heard Mr. Schreiner make upon Mr. Rhodes during his criticism of the Government policy, exposed the underlying reason of the Bond's aversion at that moment to increased representation. They dreaded lest it should extend the ever-widening area of Mr. Rhodes's influence, for it had become apparent more than a year ago that he was still, as in the early nineties, the strongest political force in South Africa.

It was idle to imagine that his potentiality of mental and material resource could be neutralised for any length of time. His return to virtual, if not to actual, power, has of course been accelerated by the absence of any man even remotely capable of taking his place. There is in Mr. Cecil Rhodes, as in all great leaders, a

certain elemental invincibility which appeals as much to the imagination as to the intelligence. To assume that the average elector, or indeed the average member of Parliament, records his vote according to the dictates of what Kant called "pure reason" is to assume too much. The real touchstone of his allegiance or of his disloyalty is the personal equation, complicated, no doubt, by motives of self-interest. Thus that statesman will see brave days in whom is incarnated the dramatic, the heroic idea. Those who want to eat their cake and have it, and those who have no cake at all—two-thirds, that is, of the human race—will be on his side inevitably, for the spoil's sake, if for no other motive. Peradventure it may be the winning side before mediocrity comes shambling down the slopes of Pisgah. Such reflections at least serve to strengthen the hands of a man of Destiny. But those who are not for him will be against him very persistently—just such a band of reactionaries as are against Mr. Rhodes.

For the belief that peace and goodwill towards Englishmen reigns throughout Cape Colony, so industriously promulgated in England

by a section of the Radical party, is the merest fiction. The most powerful political association in South Africa, the Afrikaner Bond, has not abated one jot or tittle of its animosity towards Mr. Rhodes's policy, and its presiding genius, Mr. Hofmeyr, has strained every nerve to secure the defeat of the Progressive party both at the polls and in the House of Assembly. Ever since that fatal December dawn at Krugersdorp, whose memory is still greener than we would have it to be, Mr. Hofmeyr's influence has been exerted rather to stimulate than to quench that racial bitterness which may yet work the ruin of South Africa, although he may have abstained through motives of expediency from encouraging his compatriots in the Transvaal to let loose the dogs of war.

This is not to accuse the Afrikaner community at large of disloyalty to the Queen; many of them are cordial supporters of Great Britain as the Paramount Power. But the Afrikaner Bond is a concentration of that rancour born three years ago, and if its little finger is not stronger than its father's loins, it is not the fault of Mr. Hofmeyr. He recruits his followers from the quintessentially Dutch

party, which is opposed to progress in any direction, and drills them into a solid phalanx of organised prejudice. Why has the Progressive party at the Cape lost two general elections in the space of a few months? The reason, to any one who knows South Africa of to-day, is not far to seek. The Progressive party is weakest just where the Bond is strongest, and no one realises this more profoundly than Mr. Rhodes himself. To say that the organisation of the former is defective is to understate the case. For all practical purposes there is no organisation at all. Two associations exist whose object is to promote British influence in the Cape Colony—the South African League and the South African Political Association. The latter body owes its existence to Mr. Rose Innes, one of the members for Cape Town, and is wedded to his peculiar policy of militant vacillation. Its energies seem to be chiefly expended in calling Mr. Innes the Incorruptible and in differing on questions of principle from the rival society. The best that can be said for the South African League is that it means well, and the worst, that it is grotesquely mismanaged—a fact which is not controverted by



the noise some of its members have recently been making in Johannesburg. Its President, Captain Brabant, who, with Sir Gordon Sprigg, represents East London in the Cape Assembly, is an amiable and enthusiastic person who thinks a great deal about the League and very little about South Africa, with the result that the tactics of his society rather recall the Ladies' Committee of a charitable institution than the executive of a serious political organisation. Under these circumstances it is not surprising that its decision counts for little in the councils of the Party, and that much valuable time is wasted before the elections in personal recriminations among the Progressive candidates.

There is no doubt that this entire lack of order and authority has cost the Party more than one seat, just as the triumph of the Bond at the last general election is due to the perfect unity of purpose which animates its members and their subjection to the will of their virtual leader. Mr. Hofmeyr, who is a born disciplinarian, rules his lieutenants, among whom Mr. Schreiner himself must be reckoned, with a rod of iron. They fight under orders as one man, each kindling his rushlight fire in



the flame of an old man's anger. His is the power behind the throne, unassailable because intangible. To his persistent energy and its marvellous organisation the Bond owes its strength, though it is, after all, but the strength of a drag on the wheel of Time.

The figure of the late member for Stellenbosch has, to my mind, a certain grim pathos. Though I never exchanged a word with Mr. Hofmeyr, we sat for many days side by side watching the fight from the Strangers' Gallery of the House of Assembly, where his presence aroused childish resentment in the rank and file of the opposing faction then, of course, in office. I have since regretted that I neglected so many opportunities of making Mr. Hofmeyr's acquaintance, but I always felt that having seen me repeatedly in the company of Mr. Rhodes he regarded me as an enemy in advance. Maybe also, like most of his compatriots, he considered a taste for politics an evil thing in womanhood. That possibility did not, however, prevent my observing him silently from my corner. He gave me the impression of one who had looked death in the face, and had made up his mind to die game. I do not refer to his own personal

extinction, but to the slow engulfing of those gods which his fathers made and which are dear to him, by the invasion of the modern spirit, as sand silts up a river with the force of the incoming tide. The dream of an Afrikaner Republic uniting a reclaimed South Africa, may delude Mr. Schreiner's imagination: but Mr. Hofmeyr's fierce and weary eyes must have pierced the veil that clouds the inevitable. He, at least, will not go one step forward to hasten the slow fusion of the English and Afrikaner elements in the Cape Colony which, not our generation, perhaps, but the next, will probably witness. A colleague with an itch for peace-making, whom I met, once asked Mr. Hofmeyr if anything would induce him to join issues again with Mr. Rhodes. Quoth he, in the words of Edgar Poe's raven, "Nevermore!" and subsequent events do not seem to indicate that he has altered his decision.

How far the personal influence of Mr. Rhodes will win men to allegiance, when he brings himself into direct contact with them, I had an opportunity of gauging during the 1898 election at Vryburg, where I broke my southward journey on purpose to hear him

address the electors. Take again his old constituency of Barkly West, where the Dutch farmer predominates. In both these last elections they voted for him more unanimously than ever they did in his most transcendent days. And this almost isolated victory seems to point to the conclusion that had he sought the confidence of the Cape Colonist personally, instead of touring round the Courts of Europe, the result of the last general election might have been different. For there are after all only two forces available for any fight anywhere—the individual and the collective. To neglect both is to ensure at least temporary defeat. There are those, however, who think that Mr. Rhodes has already sacrificed too much to retain the goodwill of the Cape. The future of South Africa would, they opine, be better served by the devotion of his entire energies to the vast region in the North which bears his name. And verily Rhodesia could more easily dispense with the Cape than the Colony could do without it and its maker.

To one who takes an acute interest in the study of human character and its influence upon the political life of a people, the Cape House of

Assembly is an enthralling place. The majority of its members belonging to both factions are, of course, mere pawns in the contest for party supremacy and personal power. But among those who have exercised an intermittent control over a proportion of these units, the name of Mr. Rose Innes must be inscribed. In a Parliament whose factions are numerically speaking almost equal, the vote of the *tertium quid* is frequently the casting vote. It was in fact this alternately cursed and courted Third Party, of which Mr. Rose Innes is the leader, which turned Sir Gordon Sprigg's government out of office in June of last year.

By profession an advocate of the High Court, Mr. Innes joined the Rhodes ministry of 1890 as Attorney-General, and helped to stitch its shroud in 1893. Wearing the white flower of a blameless political life, he is best described as the conscience-keeper of the Senate. His ability, united to an idealism which is obviously sincere and not too obviously Utopian, made him at one time the hero of an outside public, which had learnt to dread the militant free-lance as much as the torpid Retrogressive. In the troublous days

which followed the close of 1895 men looked to Mr. Rose Innes as to one who dreamed of political purity rather than of power. Here, they said, was the hand to cleanse the Augean stables, but they looked in vain. Again when, at the beginning of the Session which ended in 1898, the resignation of Dr. Te Water left the Colonial Secretaryship vacant, wishes both loud and deep were expressed that Mr. Rose Innes should fill the place. The Member for the Cape Division, scenting, it may be, a bribe in the shape of a portfolio, continued, however, to hold a watching brief on the cross benches. As a speaker he is second to none. To Mr. Rose Innes, however, the judicial mind is much more of a handicap than a help. It sterilises an enthusiasm which is essentially rather passive than active, and at the same time generates a sort of defensive superiority which makes for isolation. His friends are beginning to speak of him as a man with a great future behind him. It is certainly difficult to foresee the ultimate sphere of his influence in Cape politics, unless he is content to remain for ever the mouthpiece of those martyrs to a morbid scrupulosity, called in America "Mugwumps." Distrusting beyond all

things the influence of Mr. Rhodes, he has hitherto refused to associate himself with those whose general policy is identical with that of his former chief, mitigated, however, by the necessity of tempering the wind to the lamb about to be shorn. At the same time, he has nothing in common with Mr. Schreiner and the Bond. His Native Liquor Bill made him anathema to the avaricious Dutch trader, while his support of the claims of the towns to increased representation and a reduced tariff renders any cordial understanding between Mr. Rose Innes and the rural party equally hopeless.

For the moment, at least, the reins of government lie in the restless hands of Mr. Schreiner, who, like Mr. Innes, is a barrister by trade, and was for a brief period Attorney-General under the premiership of Mr. Rhodes. Here, however, all parallel between the two men ceases. There is nothing typically legal about Mr. Schreiner. His dominant characteristic is, one would say, an overmastering ambition of the white-hot kind, which in a soldier makes for glory and in a statesman for disaster. In the Middle Ages he would have led a crusade; to-day he leads the forlorn hope of "Africa for the Afrikanders."

One sees in him the advocate of a petrified patriotism, almost amounting to a phantasy of the retrospective imagination, which is essentially alien to the spirit of modern civilisation. Intellectually speaking, Mr. Schreiner is above the average, though he cannot be said to shine in debate. As a speaker he is grandiloquent and verbose, seeming somehow to lack all sense of proportion in argument. An irritable temper, impatient of contradiction, makes him a difficult man to work with, and one unlikely permanently to consolidate interests which are naturally divergent. But Mr. Schreiner's leadership is, after all, more titular than actual, for the hand behind the throne is the hand of Mr. Hofmeyr. Another of Mr. Rhodes's most eager opponents, who was once of his own household, now shares the Treasury bench with Mr. Schreiner. The Hon. Member for Namaqualand, Mr. Merri-  
man, held the Finance portfolio in 1890. But the unfortunate events of 1895 converted him into a sort of "Scourge of God," and a ready tool to Mr. Hofmeyr's avenging temper. Mr. Merriman is a demagogue by temperament, chiefly remarkable for his vocabulary of offensive adjectives which have, by a curious irony, earned



for him the title of "the greatest ornament of the House." It was this gentleman who, arrogating to himself plenary powers, was dismissed by Sir Bartle Frere in 1878. Age has not, however, withered nor custom staled his talent for vituperation. His methods remind one of Lord Randolph Churchill's before the responsibilities of office had taught him that constructive ability was even more necessary to a statesman than the power to make "mediocrity with a double-barrelled name" quail before the consciousness of its own incapacity.

In the event of the return of the Progressive Party to power, the Premiership would, in the absence of Mr. Rhodes, probably fall again to the lot of Sir Gordon Sprigg, who has already proved himself an adequate, if not a brilliant ornament. His unwearying attention to the most minute cares of office, and his conscientiousness, have inspired a confidence not entirely untinged with contempt. It should not, however, be forgotten that he stood in the breach when a braver man might well have shrunk from the task. His reign was not one in which to make history. It was a time to "lie low and say nuffin," and Sir Gordon Sprigg did all that



could be done in that direction, and a little more. If he is not a strong man he is certainly a tenacious one, with a useful capacity for enduring all things.

For sheer ability there was no man in that Ministry, and few out of it, to match Sir James Sivewright, late Commissioner of Public Works. In developing the great system of railway communication devised by Mr. Rhodes he has done immense service both to the Government and to the country. His administrative faculty and capacity for organisation remind one of Mr. Chamberlain. It is, perhaps, the rarest of all capacities, and the most indispensable in a statesman—the quality which actually makes the difference between a statesman and a politician. In the House Sir James Sivewright is a keen debater, the only one who can stand up against Mr. Merriman's ragged regiment of invectives; and the fact that a man far inferior to him in ability was placed at the head of the Ministry is remarkable. Mr. Rhodes, whose voice predominates in the counsels of the Progressives, has, however, a marked distaste to the elevation of colleagues who are not entirely under his thumb. Had Sir James Sivewright been

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made Prime Minister at the critical moment when Sir Gordon Sprigg assumed the reins of government, there is no doubt that he would not have degenerated into a mere figure-head. Subsequent events have, in fact, proved him to be capable of differing radically from the tactics of the more militant members of his own party, with the result that for the present, at least, his services are lost to the colony.

## CHAPTER III.

## THE CITY OF GOLD.

IF you would have the outward aspect of Johannesburg graven eternally upon the retina of memory, go up to the summit of the hill named after the hospital, and look over the flat leagues of endless desert whereon the town has grown as between the morning and the evening of a day. Although the sky is a canopy of stainless blue, the prospect from the hill is obscured by that film of shifting dust which is to Johannesburg what the fog is to London—a veil that she would fain cast away, but cannot. Through its folds one receives the impression of something in the process of being unpacked. The rows of dwarfed houses are carelessly huddled together, like boxes in the custom house of a continental station. Here and there a pretentious pile of red brick rises irrelevantly from the middle or the corner of the

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crouching street; here and there a few world-weary mimosa trees lift up clusters of soiled blossoms from a tangle of grey leaves that should be green. Eastward of that section of the town consecrated to commercial activity, stretches the suburb of Doornfontein, powdered over with little red and white villas, insubstantially pretty, tentatively elegant, bearing, as regards architecture, a fiftieth cousinship to Queen Anne. These are the homes of successful financiers who are still intent on working out their commercial salvation. Each house is encircled by that wide verandah which is one of the most characteristic features of African life. The *stoep* bears about the same relation to the Afrikaner as his *café* does to the Frenchman. There he transacts his business, and distracts his leisure: there he smokes, drinks, loves, and sometimes dies. Not even the jerriest builder would dream of dispensing with it, or the frail-looking iron roof that makes-believe to be tiles. Abruptly to the west of Johannesburg town lies the district called Burgersdorp and the farther portions of Braamfontein, squalid and hideous beyond words, where even the tired mimosas refuse to flourish, and where the very dust

changes its ruddy warmth of colour into a lifeless grey.

Turning northward, the landscape changes perceptibly to something which is almost beauty. The Saxonwald, with its avenues of spruce and deodar, its aisles of poplars that are like a lace of chrysoprass, and its exquisite absinthe-tinted eucalyptus trees, is a miracle. Tannhäuser's barren staff, that "bloomed in the great Pope's sight," is not more wonderful than this forest of verdure, wrung by man's energy out of the sterile sand. Here, at least, is one good thing that has come out of dynamite; but, like everything else, it shares in that breathless haste which is the psychological keynote of Johannesburg. The hand that planted the trees had apparently no time to make roads between them. Stony and uneven tracks, dark with scorched undergrowth, are good enough for the hurrying wayfarer. Thus, the Saxonwald and the doll's houses of the financiers do not suggest the solid foundations of a nascent colony, but the volatile caprice of the briefest birds of passage who have made homes and highways as a confectioner makes an ice-cream cake: as a visitor throws a jest through a half-open door:

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as a woman smiles at a lover whom she means to leave on the morrow.

Yet this half-baked, hastily-fashioned, sketch of a town is one of the most interesting places in the world. In a recent speech Lord Salisbury divided the nations of the earth into the living and the dying. If the same definition may be applied to cities, there is surely no place on the face of the globe so acutely, so terribly, alive as the virtual capital of the South African Republic. Here the very stones seem surcharged with that human vibration which makes life seethe and burn like lava in a crater. In the towns of the Old World a vast proportion of the population observe with indifference the trend of civic and political life. But here there is no parallel to that background of law-abiding inertia. Every man, woman, and child holds an opinion, poignant and intrusive, upon the relations between the State and the inhabitant.

Then, again, this place owes something of its marvellous vitality to the fact that its leaders are young men who, in the absence of class distinction and petrified officialism, have come to the front while still in their prime. Walter Pater once wrote concerning enthusiasm that

“to maintain this ecstasy is success in life.” Yet the glory of Johannesburg seems to have departed while the dawn is still on the lips of her sons. At the moment of my visit the volcanic elements out of which it had been made were in a state of suspended animation. A cloud other than its accustomed pall of red dust overshadowed it—a cloud as large as a Boer’s hand. Its existence no one denied. Men of all nations and views alike deplored the depression which was reducing this place, once fantastically prosperous, to the verge of bankruptcy. All classes of society were equally affected by it, the artisan no less than the financier, the tradesman more perhaps than either. Coincident with this widespread starvation, side by side with these insolvent shopkeepers and paper millionaires stands a record output of gold—3,674,885 ounces from January to August 1899 inclusive, as against 2,869,098 ounces during the first eight months of last year—an abundant proof that the subterranean wealth of the country is as great as ever, and more accessible. In the words of Ibsen’s John Gabriel Borkman, the hidden treasure calls aloud to be liberated, while half the houses in Johannesburg are

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untenanted, its Exchange deserted, and its poor starving.

Months have now elapsed since the words contained in the last paragraph appeared in the columns of the *Morning Post*, and the tension which then appeared acute has intensified a hundred-fold. It is not my intention to detail the course of events, still fresh in the memory of every one, which culminated in the presentation of a monster petition to the Queen, imploring the intervention of the British Government on behalf of the oppressed Uitlander. The Conference which shortly followed it brought Sir Alfred Milner face to face with President Kruger, and riveted the eyes of the whole civilised world upon the affairs of the South African Republic. The negotiations then became daily more acrimonious, and between England and the Transvaal there hung an unsheathed sword. But beyond the fact that President Kruger has now Great Britain to reckon with as well as the Uitlander, the condition of things in Johannesburg has only changed in degree, not in character. During the year 1898 the policy emanating from Pretoria was the same as it was the year before ; the only new factor in the



situation being that the Uitlander had reached that point which marks the limit of human endurance.

There is, nevertheless, an impression still current in certain sections of English opinion, and shared to some extent by myself before my visit to the Transvaal, that the grievances of the Uitlanders have been grossly and intentionally exaggerated. So far as I personally am concerned, my sojourn in Johannesburg and Pretoria served to dispel that impression. An investigation of the conditions of life and industry on the spot must force the conviction on an unbiassed mind that the manifold restrictions which hedge the liberty and enterprise of the alien population located there, are, for the most part, as oppressive as they are unnecessary.

There is, moreover, another misapprehension very prevalent in this country regarding the claims of the Uitlander in respect of the franchise, and this misapprehension has been increased by the fact that at Bloemfontein Sir Alfred Milner subordinated all other grievances to the President's persistent refusal to enfranchise aliens on any terms whatever. In spite, however, of the prominence which has been recently given to

this question by the British Government I have no hesitation in stating, as indeed I did many months ago, that the vast majority of the Uitlanders do not want the franchise, and would not exercise the right to vote if they had it. The only inhabitants of the Transvaal who suffer under their exclusion are the Afrikaners of English descent, who came thither from the Cape Colony when the gold mines were first opened. This comparatively small section of the Uitlander population, having been born in South Africa, is prepared to take root in any portion of its soil. But the actually English and American, as well as the French and German residents in Johannesburg, are absolutely indifferent on this point, although they are all, in respect of their other disabilities, equally intolerant of the Government policy. It must be remembered that the bulk of the alien population is, as I have already pointed out, essentially migratory, for the average Uitlander regards himself not as a colonist but as an exile. He counts the days of his voluntary expatriation as a penance which will insure his return, a conquering and gilded hero, to the land of his fathers. He would not, if he could, become a

son of the South African Republic, for, as far as the present generation is concerned, any genuine fusion of the Boer and Uitlander elements is a possibility which has long appeared derisive to both parties who await to-day the issue of the conflict which will sweep the weaker into the limbo of subjection.

I discussed this matter with many prominent Uitlanders belonging to all nationalities, and found an unvarying apathy on the subject of the franchise. In support of my contention, however, I will quote two notable expressions of Uitlander opinion, one antecedent to the Raid and the other subsequent to it. Among the correspondence of the members of the Reform Committee in Johannesburg, which was seized by the Boers, there is a letter, published in the Transvaal Green Book, addressed by Mr. Lionel Phillips to Mr. Beit, which runs as follows: "I may say that, as you of course know, I have no desire for political rights, and believe as a whole that the community is not ambitious in this respect." Again, in an article entitled "Our Creed," which appeared in the *Johannesburg Times*, a Uitlander organ supported by several of the Rand capitalists, on

March 28, 1898, it was written: "Further, we shall not agitate in favour of any demagogic demands for such superfluous political privileges and luxuries as the franchise. Time alone may confer these benefits; at present they are outside the purview of practical men, and it is to the cause of practical men that our services are dedicated." Of the accuracy of these views I received confirmation from practically all sections of the Uitlander community, with the exception of the colonial-born English and the professional agitators of the South African League.

Of these circumstances Sir Alfred Milner was doubtless cognizant when he recently refused to discuss with President Kruger any point of contention save the principle of enfranchisement. His attitude was the outcome, not, assuredly, of ignorance, but presumably of a desire to limit the scope of English intervention. In this determination to assist the Uitlander without emasculating him, the High Commissioner proves that he has acquired during his brief tenure of office a profound knowledge of the temper and character of the aliens on the Rand, and that he is neither the tool nor the enemy of the "helots," whose wrongs he is trying to remedy.

The main cause of the prevalent depression and consequent friction is to be found in the iniquitous system of indirect taxation which cripples the mining industry on every hand. The most obvious of these burdens are the price of dynamite and the excessive railway tariff for the transport of coal and food stuffs. In 1897, in response to the importunity of the mine-owners, the Government appointed an Industrial Commission to report on the question, which recommended various reforms, including the appointment of an advisory board composed of an equal number of State nominees and Uitlanders, but the advice of its own Commission was simply ignored at Pretoria. The trifling reductions granted were neither large enough nor radical enough to relieve the tension. Yet, if these were extended in accordance with the recommendations of the Commission, the working expenses of the mines would be lessened to the amount of 2*s.* 2*d.* per ton of ore, which would, on the figures of 1896, convert several mines which are now either closed down or working at a loss, into dividend-paying concerns.

The cost of dynamite and coal transport are

not by any means the only impositions which hamper the industry. The maladministration of the Gold Law in relation to thefts of amalgam and of the Pass and Liquor Laws constitute as great a charge on its resources as any direct tax which the Government dare impose. In addition to this, the prices of freight for machinery and stores, and the enormous transport duty on food stuffs, proportionately increases the cost of both white and black labour. The disposition of the Government towards the industry is further proved by the fact that all applications for new mining claims in the Transvaal during the past few years have been refused, and that the right to work existing claims has, in several cases, been cancelled. Such were the initial causes of the stagnation in trade, which has slowly depopulated Johannesburg, the centre of the richest goldfield in the world.

To judge from the tenor of the Volksraad debates on the insistently demanded concessions to the mining industry, it would seem that the arbitrary legislation, which has come near killing the goose that lays the golden eggs, is framed as much in ignorance as in malice. The average member of the Volksraad is still, to

all intents and purposes, a Boer peasant, wrested from the pursuit of husbandry to govern a conglomerate population, whose needs are as unintelligible to him as their language. The discovery of the goldfields may have saved his country from bankruptcy, but it has changed its character from the pastoral to the commercial. Contact with the civilisation of the modern world has but robbed him of the primitive virtues of his class, without fitting him to cope with the new conditions and activities it has brought in its train. Nor, indeed, has he proved himself capable of controlling the ordinary machinery of administration. Quite recently an investigation of the Treasury Department has brought to light a system of wholesale speculation which is no doubt largely responsible for the unsatisfactory condition of the State finances. The annual report of the Inspector-General of Offices reveals alike the utter disorganisation of the department as well as the corrupt practices of the officials. It has, moreover, been calculated that every third burgher receives State assistance, either in the form of charity or emolument. Thus, with an increasing expenditure and a decreasing revenue, it is scarcely

surprising that the Government has been seeking to replenish the Treasury both by raising a loan with the co-operation of European financiers, and by imposing further taxation on the long-suffering Uitlander. Only one conclusion can be deduced from facts so eloquent and so significant, which might be amplified by a thousand details. The outlines of the causes which have produced the present situation may, however, serve to indicate the incapacity of the Boer to govern, righteously and intelligently, either himself or his neighbour.

There are, however, certain possible developments which may follow in the train of enfranchisement, and affect the existing relations of master and servant in a manner prejudicial to the gold industry. The fact that the great companies on the Rand did not foster the Reform movement in its incipency in 1892, and have held more or less aloof from the present agitation, may probably be ascribed to a dread that enfranchisement might turn out to be a very mixed blessing, if ever attained. A strike of white operatives that recently took place on the Robinson Deep, in which the men, though entirely in the wrong, were able to dictate terms



to their employers, seems to indicate that the miner's estimate of his importance in the economy of the Rand is already greater than it used to be. In the event of a simple franchise law, with a short residential qualification coming into operation, he would not be slow in discovering his importance as a political factor. The white miners on these fields are an intelligent class and, until forced into an expression of opinion on political matters by the attitude of their employers, they forebore to meddle in disputes between the Uitlander and the Boer Government. They are now, however, sufficiently conversant with the questions which agitate the classes immediately above them to realise the power which the possession of a vote would confer. A strike on the Rand organised on a large scale, where skilled labour is difficult to procure, would involve the obdurate capitalist in a loss of millions, affecting not only the mining companies themselves, but also the foreign investor. Enfranchisement, if extended to the miners—and it is difficult to see how this class can be excluded—may thus create a terrible engine for mischief, and probably sow the seeds of a hitherto unknown antagonism between

capital and labour. To all but the most virulent opponents of Pretoria, to all, that is, who have anything to lose, these considerations give pause.

Indeed, if the future of Johannesburg were entirely dependent upon the political aspect of things, it would be impossible to avoid a profoundly pessimistic view of the outlook. Yet the ultimate prosperity of the Rand depends primarily upon its financial, rather than upon its political, position. To the alien resident there the two things are, of course, inseparable. He has, in fact, created out of his grievances a monster that has nearly destroyed him commercially, and that is really responsible for the perpetuation of the sentiment of distrust which, generated by the Raid in the mind of the British public, has alienated its confidence in the Rand as a field of investment. Yet, however unsatisfactory the political position of the Uitlander may be to himself, its effect on the security of the goldfields is merely temporary. Indeed, the depression in the South African market, which followed the boom of 1895, has not been void of advantage to the European shareholder, for it has created, among other things, an entirely new system of mine

management, to which the increased output must be mainly attributed.

It is not merely the fact that the Rand yielded up more of its treasure last year than ever before, which inclines one to the conviction that a new era of prosperity will dawn upon the Transvaal goldfields when the sword has gone back into its scabbard again. It is in the cause, not in the mere circumstance, of this increased output, that we may find reason for the hope that is in us. The first, and the chief, of these causes is the immense reduction in working expenses which has been effected through careful management upon nearly every mine on the Rand. Taking the Chamber of Mines' statistics for the past three years as a basis of calculation, it will easily be seen that the improved profits of some of the best-known companies go hand in hand with a considerably decreased expenditure.

The statistics for June, 1896, reveal an average working cost of rather more than thirty-five shillings per ton on the principal mines of the Rand. By the middle of 1898, however, the same work was being done at a cost per ton which varied from twenty-one to

twenty-five shillings. This enormous difference is not entirely due to rigorous curtailing of expenses, and at this point we reach the second cause of the increased profits and the improved prospect. To a certain extent this more favourable condition may be ascribed to the better methods of gold extraction now in practice. The slimes treatment, brought to perfection largely through the instrumentality of the Rand Central Ore Reduction Company, has enabled the Crown Reef to obtain a total extraction of over ninety per cent. Large slimes plants have also been erected at the Geldenhuis Estate, and on the Robinson, with most encouraging results. In addition to this new process over 2000 more stamps have been working since the summer of 1895, on account of which the total amount of ore crushed has increased by over 2,000,000 tons. If one takes the statistics published by the Chamber of Mines as an indication of what the totals for the current year would have been if the outbreak of hostilities had not inaugurated a reign of inactivity on the Rand, the average of stamps employed would have been about 5000, resulting in a total crushing of 10,000,000 tons of ore. Furthermore, the total

value of the gold production should have reached the astounding figure of £22,000,000, as against £17,000,000 of the year 1898.

These figures, warranted by official reports, speak for themselves and demonstrate, more clearly than anything else can do, how little the eventual financial position of the Rand will be affected by the friction between the Government and the Uitlander. Vexatious as the present system of legislation is, harassing as the restrictions placed upon the mining industry are, the incalculable wealth that underlies this desert of scorched sand, now confirmed by the success of the deep-level investigations, is the real determining factor in the future of the Transvaal. Misgovernment, and even war, can only affect the stock market, and that temporarily. The gold in the ground must eventually readjust the balance of prosperity. When it does so, there is consolation for the depression in the reflection that the ultimate rise in market values will not be a fictitious inflation, as it was in 1895, but the expression of a justified confidence engendered by solid results, obtained through years of unsparing activity and rigid economy. The extravagance which characterised mine manage-

ment during the infancy of the Rand is now a thing of the past. It is estimated that a saving of three shillings per ton has been effected in the use of dynamite and coal alone, while the cost of shaft-sinking has been reduced from £40 to between £15 and £20 a foot. Plant and machinery of all kinds have also come down in price.

There is reason, moreover, to hope that mechanical science may yet be instrumental in solving the greatest of the difficulties which still militate against the perfect development of the Rand. I refer to the ever-burning problem of native labour. Altogether about eighty thousand natives are now employed in the goldfields. A constant deficit exists of at least twenty-five thousand, and there is no immediate prospect of the supply coming up to the demand. Every effort is therefore being made to substitute mechanical for manual labour, especially in the direction of steam and electric drills. A new drill has recently been tested which claims to have raised the present available force of three horse-power to fifteen horse-power, and which should, if it fulfils the expectations of its inventor, have a great future before it in South

Africa. As it is, the price of labour has been reduced all round, but the varying conditions on different mines have caused the average wage to fluctuate very considerably.

With regard to the white labour, the great cost of living prevents any appreciable reduction in the rate of wages. Economy in this direction has been more generally affected by the employment of fewer hands. This policy, inevitable as it was, has, of course, tended to throw numbers of men out of work, and consequently to increase the distress in Johannesburg. It is, after all, in the interests of the European shareholder that the working costs have been reduced to a minimum, in order that maximum profits may subdue the misgivings of the timid investor.

Another detail of mine management, the importance of which has only been realised in recent years, has largely contributed to produce the altered conditions on the Rand. Until the process of sorting was first adopted on the Ferreira Mine about three years ago, practically the whole of the ore taken out of the mine went to the battery. In 1899 the percentage of ore crushed varies according to the width of the reef. On the Treasury, for example, 23·01 per cent.

is discarded, as against the 10·27 of the previous year. The more perfect the system of sorting is, the higher the percentage of gold extracted, while an immense saving in wear and tear to machinery is also accomplished. The processes of sorting as yet in use are comparatively simple, and do not, therefore, appreciably heighten expenditure. It must, at the same time, be remembered that low working costs are not in themselves an infallible proof of good management. Mines vary as much as individuals, and each must be treated according to its idiosyncrasy ; but the tendency, however, in the direction of economy is a welcome one, and makes on the whole for the benefit of the absent shareholder. To the impartial observer, who is unblinded by the storm and stress of to-day, the prospects on the Rand are more reassuring than they have ever been.

Before leaving Johannesburg I availed myself of the opportunity, kindly afforded me by the representative of Messrs. Eckstein & Co., to make a close inspection of the process by which gold is extracted from the Robinson mine. Besides possessing the advantage of its proximity to the town, the machinery on the Robinson and the



methods of working adopted there are, perhaps, the most perfect on the Rand. The manager, Mr. Price, was kind enough to accompany me on my tour of inspection and spent several hours in explaining the extensive and complicated machinery. The descent to the 600 ft. level was an interesting, if not a pleasant, experience. The Robinson has an inclined shaft, lighted all the way down with electricity, so that you see the solid rock within an inch of your head during the whole of your giddy progress and, consequently, feel as if you were being dragged down into the depths of a nethermost hell. At the bottom there is nothing of the feverish activity which impressed me at a later date in the Kimberley mine—nothing to be seen, in fact, but narrow tunnels cut in divers directions through the rock. Needless to say, no blasting was going on while I was there, so, after observing the working of the rock-drill for a few minutes, I was quite ready to return to the surface, for the atmosphere was asphyxiating, though not, of course, impure. Again, an agonising sensation of being torn up by the roots, and the terrible nearness of the wall, with the result that I regained a foothold on the

earth's crust with my passion for subterranean exploration somewhat chilled.

After a few minutes' rest, however, I was sufficiently revived to resume my quest, which led me forthwith in the direction of the battery. For miles the regular thud of these iron hammers, beating upon the crumbling rock, is distinctly audible. Day and night, without a moment's respite, it throbs continually, like the beating of some monstrous heart—a type of perpetual motion. I asked Mr. Price if the sound of it did not disturb him at night, but he said that, on the contrary, he could not sleep away from it, so entirely had the noise of the machinery become part of the scheme of the universe for him. Within the battery-house the clamour is, of course, so overpowering that no communication between persons standing together is possible, and the operatives frequently turn stone deaf after a few months' work in the vicinity of the stamps. From the battery the ore, ground to the consistency of powder, is washed over plates of mercury, thus forming the amalgam, while the refractory parts are carried into the cyanide vats. There the chemical solution precipitates the gold on to lead shavings,

suspended in ridges through the poisonous fluid. Besides the slimes treatment, which is now almost everywhere applied, a complete chlorination plant is at work on the Robinson mine, whereby a further eight per cent. of gold is recovered. This is done by roasting the remnants of the ore in a series of huge ovens, so that all dross is consumed, leaving tiny lumps of purest gold among the ashes. The Robinson is, however, the only mine on the Rand where this process is in use.

Some weeks later I was able to extend my acquaintance with the mysteries of gold-mining by a visit to the Van Ryn, which is situated at some distance from Johannesburg. Having taken the train to Boksburg, we drove for about three miles over a bleak desolate plain, on which no living thing, either animal or vegetable, exists. After lunch at the old Boer homestead still standing on the Van Ryn property, my examination of the machinery was followed by a native war-dance, which the manager had kindly arranged for my entertainment. It was an extraordinary and interesting spectacle. About fifteen hundred natives, many of them fantastically decorated with feathers, skins and beads,

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formed themselves into a semicircle. The dance began by each native taking measured steps forward and bringing his feet violently to the ground, to beat time to the weird, droning, chant sung by the whole phalanx. At intervals a native leaps out of the line, and executes a *pas seul*, punctuated with shrieks and violent gestures. Now and again several natives separated themselves from the mass and danced together the dance peculiar to their tribe, while the others played wild airs on the row of graduated sticks, usually described as a "Kaffir piano." The treadmill of daily work in the mines, the exactions of the white man, were forgotten. Each native had for the moment gone back to the blatant barbarism of his past, as the old traditions of his race claimed him. It was a strange scene, not without its pathos, which I shall never forget.

An evening train carried me and the directors of the Van Ryn back to Johannesburg, the pivot round which this marvellous industry revolves. It was then sullenly watching its prosperity wither under the heel of Boer tyranny and ignorance. Ruin stalked in the streets of the Golden City, and hunger knocked at its doors,

the while £14,000,000 worth of gold has been taken out of the Rand during the early part of 1899. These circumstances point to the most amazing paradox of modern times, which can only be explained by the fact that none of the profits from the gold have of late years found their way into Johannesburg. The capitalists who hold those shares in the soundest gold-mining ventures which are not in the possession of the British investor, long since shook the dust of Johannesburg from off their feet. They fled from conditions of life which the Government of the country had rendered intolerable. And who can blame them? The Uitlander of to-day is far from being the bloated millionaire which he is popularly supposed to be, and which a few years ago he undoubtedly was.

Yet where the earth is not so much earth as gold, in a climate that is always May, surely vitality will beget strength at last, and strength in time generate security. Johannesburg, even in its palmiest days, was a purgatory where no one stayed longer than he could help, and its inhabitants were souls in voluntary pain who passed away to their several heavens when they had shouldered as much 'spoil as they could

carry. All things bore witness to this sentiment of a provisional existence, impatient of its squalid environment, that nothing could make contented.

For this South African mining camp has never borne any resemblance to Western America in the Bonanza days. The energy that informed it was equal, but entirely different, less romantic, perhaps, but more real and responsible. The gold-digger of the fifties was an outcast and a desperado, while the 'Frisco of that day was half a fairy-palace, and half a riotous hell. There was a glamour round it that modern Johannesburg undoubtedly lacks. The ideals of to-day are not the ideals of yesterday. The mine owners of the Rand are sober citizens, princes of commerce, frock-coated, white-shirted gentlemen, more given to the pursuit of the profitable than the picturesque. Not that the Transvaal financier as I knew him was wanting in geniality. For whole-hearted hospitality, for kindly courtesy, he could not have been surpassed in any of the world's new countries, and the stranger within his gates invariably passed out of them with very reluctant feet. There, where so many races

met, society had a cosmopolitan note. It was as free from provincial conventionality as from that lack of ceremony incidental to most youthful communities. Recently some of its members have slipped away to mansions in Park Lane. The next generation of rulers on the Rand may take from Johannesburg its unique expression of wide-eyed expectancy, and still the pulse of its feverish life. Personally, I found a magnetism in it other than its buried treasure, potent enough to draw over sea both the wise and the foolish alike.

## CHAPTER IV.

## WHAT I SAW IN PRETORIA.

To visit Pretoria without obtaining an audience from the President would be like passing away from Rome without having seen St. Peter's. Mr. Kruger is not difficult of access. Two soldiers lounging against the gate of the unpretentious bungalow which shelters the Chief of the State are the sole indications that this bungalow is not as others are. A few steps inside the door is the room wherein the President transacts official business when the weather is too cold for the *stoep* or verandah. A total lack of elegance or even comfort, and an entire disregard of ceremony, are the first impressions one receives after crossing the threshold. The long, bare room is furnished with Spartan simplicity, and is somehow suggestive of the parlour in an English hostelry during the hideous mid-Victorian reign of horsehair and mahogany. At the end is the ponderous form of an old man



seated in a chair, his eyes obscured by huge blue spectacles. He rose to greet me with the conventional hand-shake, motioned me to the hard couch by his side, and the conversation ambled clumsily along through the medium of an interpreter. Every now and then the President, who manifested a disinclination to discuss politics, except in vague parabolic phrases, bent over his spittoon, while visitors desirous of an audience frequently pushed open the door and, seeing me, passed out again. Touching the subject of the then proceeding Cape election, the President strenuously denied the accusation that the Bond had received financial assistance from the Transvaal Government. I remarked that Mr. Rhodes had told me personally that he could prove the transmission of money in jam tins to a lady relative of a Bond member. In answer to this the President smiled sardonically, and expressed a conviction that the voice of the people would contradict it—a statement which made up in emphasis what it lacked in logic. Receiving no signal to retire, I rose, at last, and took my leave.

Only much later is one able to analyse the exact impression produced by that old man in

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the chair. At first, the absence of all that makes for dignity and refinement begets a sense of irritation that the assumption of an absolute authority should be so shorn of all those attributes which grace a tyrant if they do not justify him. The spectacle of an ignorant peasant imposing a vexatious rule over an educated multitude strikes one as a relic of barbarism, the subsistence of which is, after all, the greatest testimony to President Kruger's ability. His is the strength to sit still—that invulnerable strength which only comes from the lack of learning and of imagination. Nothing like it can be found in the history of modern times ; there was nothing to compare with it in mediæval days. By some strange process of atavism, Paul Kruger seems to reincarnate the elemental forces of ignorance and superstition that dominated the primitive ages of the world. The agony and the activity of modern life sweep past his adamant composure without availing so much against it as the quiver of an eyelid. Kept in his place by the most ignorant section of his own people, he is regarded by all, except the semi-educated official class, with a sort of superstitious awe. The younger generation of Boers, who disagree

with his policy, either fear to oppose it or are powerless to do so. The Executive tolerates his despotic will, because of what he has done for the land, believing that the end of his activity is not very far off.

The days of Mr. Kruger's youth were in no wise dissimilar from the ordinary rough life of the *trek* Boer. I was told, by one who knew his early history well, that he had shot his first lion at the age of eleven, and his first Kaffir three years later. There is no doubt that his free wild life on the veldt enabled him to develop a physique of enormous strength and solidity, and to acquire that prowess in the chase which first earned for him the respect of his contemporaries. It is said and, so far as I could ascertain, truly said, that in the heyday of youth he could stand on his head in the saddle holding on to the stirrups while his horse galloped, besides being able to win a half-mile race against the fastest steed ever foaled. His hunting exploits are still related with bated breath and, although many of them may have gained something in the telling, the fact that he rarely missed a running buck at four hundred yards is authentic. He possesses, moreover, an insensibility to pain only equalled

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by an Australian aboriginal. His photographs all bear witness to the absence of a thumb on his left hand, which was injured many years ago by the bursting of a rifle. Instead, however, of submitting to the amputation counselled by his doctor, Mr. Kruger hacked off his thumb himself with a hunting-knife when the flesh had begun to mortify. This is, of course, historical, as is also the story that he extracted an aching tooth by the same methods.

Such qualities naturally help a man to rise in an uncivilised community. In the capacity of Commandant-General we subsequently find him spurring his compatriots on to victory in that war of independence which ended so ignominiously for England. In 1881 his signature was affixed to the Pretoria Convention, and he himself had become the leading figure in the triumvirate sent to England to secure it. During the following year he was elected President of that Republic which he had been so largely instrumental in re-creating. Having grasped the sceptre, Paul Kruger was not one to relinquish it, and for seventeen years he has wielded a despotic sway over the destinies of the Transvaal State. During this period he has used his

almost absolute power to perpetuate those evils which civilisation has taught us to regard as the bane of a commonwealth, and to cut off his people from those influences which we associate with progress and enlightenment. Like some maleficent deity, he has said "let there be no light," and there is none, for the nay of Oom Paul is nay.

That Mr. Kruger should for so long a space have been able to defy the educational forces of the nineteenth century, affords one sufficient proof of the strength that is in him. To resist the tide of civilisation, he has devoted not only an indomitable will, but an absolute sincerity of purpose sustained by deep religious convictions. Incredible as it may seem to the European mind, Mr. Kruger really believes that he can only preserve the independence of his State by treating the Uitlander element in it precisely as the Israelites of old treated the Ammonites and Moabites. His frequent biblical quotations in support of this theory are regarded in England as mere insult added to injury. But they are nothing of the kind. The same fanaticism which lit the fires of the Spanish Inquisition lives again in President Kruger, and therein lies one reason

of his indifference to the corruption of his officials, and his own venality in accepting bribes from every alien who is disposed to pay them. Did not the chosen people of the Lord spoil the Egyptians before they destroyed Pharaoh's hosts?

Perhaps the bitterest accusation that has of late years been levelled at Paul Kruger is that in summarily dismissing Chief Justice Kotze some months ago, he rendered Transvaal justice a sham, and its High Court a farce. As the side issues involved in this episode are complicated, I will endeavour briefly to indicate them as they were when I was at Pretoria, and as they still are. The beginning of the whole matter was a statement by Judge Kotze, in which he justified a verdict contrary to precedent by declaring the essential immutability of the Grondwet, or Constitution. In doing so he implied, and indeed asserted, that these original statutes could not be altered or modified by resolution of the Volksraad. The suit being tried before him at the time was brought by one Brown, who had, in consequence of a resolution of the Volksraad—summarily passed without reference to the people—been

deprived of his rights over certain mining claims in the vicinity of Witfontein and Luipaard's Vlei. Thereupon he, the plaintiff in this action, sought to recover damages from the Government to compensate his loss, and the Chief Justice found that his claim was valid. Being called upon by the President to reverse his sentence, and withdraw the accusation of illegal proceedings against the Volksraad, Judge Kotze refused to do so, and was despoiled forthwith of his high office. The significance of the case naturally lay, not in the question of individual justice, but in the attack upon the legislative power of the Volksraad which arose out of it.

It is an abiding principle with all the civilised nations of the world, whether restricted by the monarchical system or merely by the sovereign will of the people, that the fundamental statutes which form the rock on which their whole constitution is built should be protected from the sacrilegious hands of parliamentary parties. The Grondwet of the South African Republic was compiled in 1858 by representatives chosen by the people, many of whom had rejected with indignation the new Constitution of Potchefstrom. Almost immediately

after the confirmation of the Grondwet in the Volksraad, a clause was added thereto, providing that no resolution of that body should become law till a draft thereof should have been submitted to the people for a period of three months, so that they might, if so disposed, protest against its incorporation into the Constitution "except in cases of laws which admit of no delay." This unfortunate exception, however, practically empowered the Volksraad to impart the majesty of the law to a whole flock of hasty resolutions by marking them "Urgent," and one of these, whose urgency was purely imaginary, seems to have been specially designed for the spoliation of a single individual. The entire change in the character and conditions of the South African Republic which followed the discovery of gold had doubtless rendered the Grondwet inadequate for the growing needs of the people. But the constant tampering with the Constitution, upon which the activity of the Volksraad is chiefly expended, only serves to obscure the law without amending it. Laws are passed and proclaimed in one session, only to be altered, if not repealed, the next. In fact, this itch of the Transvaal Parliament for



legislative tinkering has contributed more towards undermining the stability of the State than even the notorious corruption in high places.

As to the ex-Chief Justice Kotze himself, he is not held in much higher esteem by the Uitlander population than he is by his own people. The fact that, in 1884, during the trial of the McCorkindale case, he declared his conviction that "a Volksraad resolution has force of law, and that the Grondwet is in no better position than any other local law approved by the Volksraad," has prevented any firm belief in the sincerity which subsequently prompted so vehement a contradiction of his previous statement. The present Chief Justice I met and conversed with at Pretoria. Judge Gregorovski is certainly one of the ablest of Oom Paul's present lieutenants. A Polish Jew by extraction, he has all those attributes which make a successful diplomatist—flexibility of mind, and suavity of manner. These conceal from the casual observer the somewhat superficial nature of his acquirements and convictions. On the Rand he is execrated for the part he took in the trial of the Reform prisoners, and "vindictive" is the

mildest adjective applied to him by the Johannesburgers.

President Kruger's consistent support of the Dynamite monopoly, even in the teeth of the Volksraad's opposition, has been almost as exasperating to the Uitlander community as his arbitrary interference with the administration of justice. In order to obtain permission to visit the largest dynamite factory in the world, you must shake the sacrilegious dust of the Rand from off your feet, and proffer your request by way of Pretoria. The best way is to make the acquaintance of Mr. Alberto Phillip, a gentleman who has the "grand manner," united to a tragic smile, and the most perfectly-fitting clothes I ever saw in my life. As his father is the managing director of the great Nobel Trust, all doors at Modderfontein fly open at the sound of his name, and everything is made easy for you from the moment you enter the saloon car of the company at Zuiirfontein, where the branch line to the factory joins the main. A luncheon, which suggested the "Café de Paris" rather than the South African veldt, awaited our arrival, and, having responded to the health of the guests in a fine Château Yquem, we started

to explore the factory under the guidance of the manager, Dr. Hoenig, who came over from Austria four years ago to organise the enterprise, and M. Robinow, the secretary, whose pink and white complexion testified to his recent appointment.

This factory is not, to the outward view, like any other kind of factory. It is not a huge block of buildings, but a series of five distinct settlements straggling over an area of several miles. Thus if, by any chance, one factory should suddenly vanish into thin air, the four others would prevent a cessation of work on the Rand for want of blasting gelatine. As a further precaution against explosion, each little house is consecrated to one stage in the fabrication of this mighty engine of destruction, and encircled by banks of sand reaching to its roof. The most dangerous part of the process is the manufacture of the nitro-glycerine. A rise in temperature, an umbrella let fall, even a sudden shout, might have reduced our whole party to the consistence of fine powder. I watched the terrible machine breathlessly, then silently crept away to a scarcely less dangerous place, where the nitro-glycerine is tested, so that

no impurity may accidentally explode it. When its purity is beyond doubt, it is then mixed either with the pink powder which forms the weaker kind of dynamite called *guhr imprégné*, used in coal-mines, etc., or with the gelatine which makes the strongest explosive yet discovered. Several houses are devoted to the different stages of mixing, until the gelatine, finally resembling yellow glue, is ready for the cartridges. This part of the work is largely performed by white women, who fold with great rapidity the cases out of paper impregnated with paraffin. At this work they can earn as much as £10 a month. After the cartridges are filled they are packed in brown paper parcels, which are enclosed in wooden cases, each one containing 50 lbs. of dynamite.

Turning the shoulder of the hill, we come upon a little town made up of red and white villas, which are the residences of the officials—a whole army of managers and chemists who are experts in the deadly science that absorbs their time and energy. Beyond the villas and the tree plantation which surrounds them, are the gigantic buildings where the sulphuric acid is obtained from sulphur, and where the nitric acid

is made from saltpetre, innumerable sacks of which are imported from South America, and piled up in an adjacent warehouse. Passing through the laboratory, we had accomplished a tour of one factory. Two of the remaining four are also at work, and turn out between them about fifty thousand cases of dynamite a month. As this amount does not, however, meet the demands of the Rand, two more factories are in process of construction. The total number of workmen employed at Modderfontein is now about two thousand, of whom nearly one-fourth are whites. These belong to various nationalities, which, as far as possible, work and live apart. The settlement we saw was entirely German. Within the precincts of another only English are located ; while on the third the hands are a mixture of Italians and a few French. On enquiry, I was informed that this vast settlement, with the cost of erection and stock to last ten months, represents a capital outlay of over £900,000. As we walked back to the train, one question rose unanswered in my mind. In the event of President Kruger abrogating the concession to the extent of permitting the importation of dynamite—a course which would present

no insuperable legal difficulty—whence and from whom would this cool million come? The capitalists, the Government, or the public? And yet “your memorialists will ever pray——”

It is often urged by sympathisers with the Transvaal Government, who have never had an opportunity of testing the truth of their views, that the Boers justify their existence in the South African Republic as an agricultural community who have transformed the country from a barren wilderness into a land flowing with milk and honey. It was not, however, until I had spent a day on a Boer farm some miles from Pretoria, that I realised how little foundation this picture had in fact. One of the farms I visited belonged to one Erasmus, not the rich Erasmus who recently married into the Kruger family, but a fair average specimen of the “Dopper” Boer class. After several hours’ drive in the company of a trader who was fluent in the *taal*, we arrived at an old house of white-washed stone, surrounded by some dilapidated sheds, and standing alone on the solitary veldt. I looked around for crops, or at least for fields in process of cultivation, but none were visible, save a neglected patch where

mealies had once grown, whose ripening ears hung on the leafless branches of a lemon tree. Beyond this there was nothing that could suggest the idea of a farm, for the cattle were all grazing far away on the low veldt. There were no pigs, not even a chicken to be seen anywhere.

We entered the house where the farmer sat smoking, an old man, whose immense frame indicated the former possession of great strength. The whole place was indescribably dirty and neglected, and reminded me of a labourer's cottage in the West of Ireland, although there was no suggestion of poverty or suffering. On the contrary, the old farmer and his wife seemed contented enough in their apathy and sloth, which neither hunger nor ambition ever disturbed. My guide laid on the table the bottle of cough mixture he had brought for one of the sons who ailed a little, and we went on our way to the next farm, where precisely the same conditions prevailed. There are hundreds more in the Transvaal exactly similar to these, for the Boers are a pastoral but not, in any sense, an agricultural people. They keep their herds, now much reduced by the late visitation of rinderpest, for themselves, and till the land only for

their own sustenance. In former years, of course, the want of a market nearer than the coast, united to the fear of native risings, rendered the cultivation of farm produce, for sale, difficult if not unprofitable. Times have changed, however, and had there been any capacity for agriculture in the Boer, he would have taken advantage of the enormous increase of population which followed the discovery of gold. There are now markets at his very door where the kindly fruits of the earth fetch prices which would be considered fabulous in England. The experiment on the Irene estate proved beyond doubt the fertility of the soil, on which practically anything will flourish, and that quickly. As it is, owing to the chronic indolence and indifference of the Boer farmer, all the farm produce consumed on the Rand has to be imported. An idea of the extent of this import trade can be gleaned from the report of Mr. Vice-Consul Evans.

In 1897, butter, to the value of £158,867, was brought into the country. Besides this, £51,813 was paid for eggs, and an equal sum for fresh fruit. Meal, grain, flour, and corn, was consumed to the amount of £360,574, and



pork to the extent of £60,568. These figures speak for themselves, as well as Mr. Evans's concluding remarks on this subject. "With pastures such as the Transvaal possesses, and a soil and climate suitable to the cultivation of all the cereals, fruit, and even of tropical products, a progressive and enterprising farming community would not permit the importation of such a large quantity of the necessities of life without serious competition."

It was, in fact, the slothful and ignorant condition of his own people that forced President Kruger to obtain from Holland the large supply of trained mechanics and engineers who now form the majority of the Government *employés* in Pretoria. The Boers were then, with very few exceptions, unable to write or read, and obviously incapable either of managing the Netherlands Railway or of filling the smallest office of State. During the past few years, however, many of the more prosperous Boers have sent their sons either to Bloemfontein or to Europe to be educated, and thus there has grown up a young generation, indigenous to the soil, who bitterly resent the Hollander element and its influence in the councils of State. The

late State Secretary, Dr. Leyds, who at the time of my visit was already flaunting in Europe his assumption of ambassadorial dignity, is even more unpopular in Pretoria than he is in England. The young Boer, enriched through the spoil wrested by his parents from the Uitlander, intoxicated by the mental superiority which his smattering of European education has given him, represents the one-eyed who, in the kingdom of the blind, is king—or who, at least, considers that he ought to be king. He is a *déclassé* who despises the older generation of his own people, and who is in turn despised by the new population on the Rand. Thus, between the devil and the deep sea, he exhausts his energies in hatred and envy of the Hollander—in his estimation the usurper who has supplanted him in all the most lucrative civil service appointments. Disapproving at heart, although he dares not openly oppose, the policy of the President, he will probably reap the whirlwind of which his fathers have sown the wind. As a class, the young Boer is interesting, although exhibiting more of the intolerable faults of youth than one can readily forgive.

In the event of the South African Republic

retaining some elements of that independence for which its citizens have fought so desperately, and latterly so mistakenly, it is possible that the young Boer will eventually drive the Hollander back from whence he came. In that day he will find his semi-education a source of weakness rather than of strength. That sentiment of patriotism which Europe has not quenched in him, will impel him to resist the Uitlander, but, as his sympathies are not with the old things, but all with the new, his heart will not be in the struggle and he will gradually succumb. Peradventure, through this gate left ajar may come the welding of interests that are now twain—the long looked-for fusion of the Dutch and English elements in South Africa.

In the ordinary course of nature Oom Paul will in time pass out of the fray, leaving behind him an imperishable, if not a venerated, name. When he is no longer here to dictate, at least three or four candidates will contend for the Presidency (assuming that the office continues to exist), none of whom are capable of filling his place. Provided that all or either survives the misfortune of war, the choice will in all

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probability lie between General Joubert ("Slim Piet," as he is called), Schalk Burger, and Wolmarans, both members of the First Volksraad. I was told by a Boer, who knows his compatriots well, that neither Joubert nor Burger was trusted by them. "But," he added, "our people are very fair. They may vote for Joubert, just to give him a chance, because he has already stood several times for the Presidency. I do not think there is much hope for Wolmarans. For many years he was constantly ill, and, although completely cured some time ago by a faith doctor, our people still regard him, more or less, as a dying man." Such a consideration as capacity does not apparently occur to the Boer elector. General Joubert is, like the present head of the state, in "the sere and yellow leaf," besides being devoid both of the qualities of statesmanship and the strength of character necessary to keep the Republic together.

There are those who now think that the younger generation of Boers which is knocking at the door with a rifle in one hand may find it locked and barred against them by the enfranchised Uitlander. But, unless a victorious

British army should sweep away the actuality of Boer independence, the Uitlander vote will have to be cast many times before it will obtain a majority in the Volksraad. In this case we shall have at Pretoria a repetition of the continual wrangling between the Progressive party and the Reactionaries which prevails in the Cape Assembly, fortified by a wealth of rancorous memories which will make legislation of any kind difficult. There is no reason to believe that the Boers will accept their defeat, whether brought about by diplomatic pressure or by the swift edge of the sword, without seeking some sort of vengeance. In the Boer character there are few admirable, and no amiable, traits, but there are the primitive virtues of courage and patriotism. When pressure from without was brought to bear upon them in the early days of their history they simply walked away from it. In 1836, and again in 1846, they trekked to the north with one consent, rather than be controlled by the English. To-day they have no outlet for their nomad propensities, and so they are dying where they stand. But the idea that they are fighting to preserve their independence is an illusion shared only by the most

ignorant among them. They are fighting for the right to oppress the Uitlander, and to prevent the substitution of liberty, equality, and fraternity for a corrupt oligarchy masquerading under the name of a republic. It is well, moreover, to remember that Mr. Gladstone's fatal act of renunciation, the London Convention of 1884, secured to all inhabitants of the Transvaal, without racial distinction, "full liberty to reside in the country, with enjoyment of all civil rights and protection for their persons and property." The following year witnessed the discovery of gold on the Witwatersrand, and at first the alien immigrants, being a potential source of revenue, were welcome. But as soon as their numbers had increased with the development of the mines, so as to constitute a new element in the community, laws excluding them from "the enjoyment of all civil rights" were enacted in deliberate defiance of the conditions under which Great Britain granted to the Transvaal independence in the management of her internal affairs. Had, however, the Government of the South African Republic been conducted in accordance with the most elementary principles of equity and honesty, I do not

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believe that his disenfranchisement would ever have troubled the soul of the Uitlander. On at least two former occasions we have made the fatal mistake of underrating our enemy when we went forth to try conclusions with the Boers. There is not a few of them who still believe that the English flag is a white handkerchief, as they saw it at Majuba Hill and at Doornkop, and it is this belief that has urged them to commence hostilities against us. If we do not now convince them of their mistake, every Englishman in South Africa will have to bite the dust, practically if not physically. The multiplicity of modern instruments of destruction renders so great the horror of this war that peace at any price, save the price of our position as the paramount power in South Africa, would have been preferable. But as English blood has already begun to flow for the oppressed Uitlander we must effectually wipe out the memory of our past reverses, or his last state will be immeasurably worse than his first. That we can do it is, of course, undeniable; but to be worth doing it must be done quickly.

## CHAPTER V.

## IN BECHUANALAND.

AMONG the solemn warnings whereby home-keeping friends try to stay the wanderer's eager feet, the horrors of coach travelling in Africa loom large. The hardships and degradations of such a journey were painted to me both by those who knew what they were talking about, and those who did not. Nevertheless, when I learned that the three days' *détour* which the railway demanded to bring me to Mafeking could be reduced to about thirty hours by taking the bi-weekly coach from Krugersdorp, I decided that no shrinking from mere physical discomfort should rob me of a unique experience. So, having despatched all heavy luggage by rail to Mafeking, I prepared to face the emergencies of life with a diminutive portmanteau and a tea basket.

Fortune favours the brave, but it was not until later that I learnt how the thoughtfulness



and influence of a prominent citizen in Johannesburg had secured for our sole use the interior of the coach. It is constructed to carry nine passengers inside, and the space assigned to each is only just sufficient to contain a moderately-sized human body in a position of absolute rigidity. If Dante could have journeyed to Mafeking in a full coach, he would have added another torture to his *Inferno*, the agony of immobility. On this occasion, however, I was not called upon to endure it.

It was mid-day when we started, myself and the two other persons who formed our party. The road, a mere dusty track across a desert of scorched grass, treeless and barren as the Sahara itself, is the road over which Jameson and his men were escorted by their Boer conquerors. Every three or four hours we halted by a wayside cabin to change mules, the while we stretched our cramped limbs and refreshed the inner woman with a brew of tea, made out of the matchless blend which I had carried over some six thousand miles. At a later stage of our journey, tea was replaced by the wing of a chicken, and a feast of *marrons glacés*, the parting gift of a sympathetic Johannesburger.

Thereafter night fell upon the desert. Our caravan struggled painfully forward over the stony path, oscillating violently from side to side, like a ship in a stormy sea. Now and then one wheel would sink so deeply into the sand that the whole vehicle trembled and creaked as the mules, urged by the driver's resounding whip to a supreme effort, brought it abruptly back to equilibrium. Inside the coach darkness prevailed, the road being too rough to admit of a lighted lamp, but this darkness contained nothing that was synonymous with peace. Thrown from side to side by every movement of the coach, we almost sighed for the usual complement of passengers as we groped vainly after our flying baggage. A sudden stop eventually arrested our crazy progress, and, the next moment, the friendly gleam of a lantern lightened our obscurity, while the guard informed us that we had reached our destination for the night.

Extricating ourselves with some difficulty from the *débris*, we followed the lantern to a shed, which, as the proprietor, a supercilious person obviously aroused from his first slumber, remarked, we had the good fortune to find

empty. An inventory of its furniture could be taken at a glance. Three stretchers stood against the corrugated iron walls, and in one corner a can and tin basin lay on the mud floor, beside a pile of packing cases, intended to serve as a table. After lighting a candle, which he stuck into an empty bottle, he left us to count our bruises and to court the god of sleep. Distrusting the aspect of the sheets, I threw myself on the outside of the bed, unwashed, but not unhappy, and slept the sleep which is not invaded even by a dream. Only those who have sought in vain that "respite and nepenthe" concern themselves with the quality of unconsciousness. At that time of my life I counted my good nights as if they were red-letter days.

Before six on the following morning we resumed our journey, the daylight, and the improved condition of the road, enabling us to go in peace. The "grey fingers of the dawn" were quenching the fading stars, as we rolled westward over the interminable veldt. As I watched the tremulous light which heralds the sunrise silently invading the desolation of the desert, I was glad that the mystery of the breaking day had never become a common and

accustomed sight to me. Only two or three times had I seen the world at the hour when it renews the glamour of its eternal youth. And then the presence of a myriad habitations, bringing into Nature's painless birth all the weariness of humanity, converted the dawn into a symbol of the remorseless wheel of fate, rousing mankind once more to his daily destiny of labour and sorrow. But here, in the desert, Nature is alone with herself, her face unstained by toil, undimmed by tears. She is born again to an everlasting and inviolate peace. No tree, no living thing broke the shadowless undulation of the plain which melted imperceptibly into the horizon of gold and pearl. Nothing obscured the face of the sun as it rose triumphantly and overflowed the boundless veldt, like the inundation of some magical sea.

And I laid my hand on my lips, remembering the text of the Lotus of the Good Law. "There issued a ray of light from the circle of hair between the brows of the Lord Buddha. It extended over eighteen hundred thousand fields, so that all those fields appeared wholly illuminated by its radiance, down to the great hell Aviki and up to the limit of existence." Pre-

sently we passed the field of Doornkop, and that little cross, girt about with stones, beneath which lie the bones of Jameson's troopers, who paid with their blood for their share of that shameful day. Only a little shifting sand between them and the glory of the dawn, for ever, as they lie alone where no other grave is, nor will be. And I envied them.

About eight o'clock we paused for a substantial breakfast within the area of the lead mines, desolate pits, that are intermittently worked at a small profit. The sun had reached its prime by the time we approached Malmani, a village of some half-dozen tin houses, where we halted for lunch. I consumed with avidity the tough beef and tougher pastry which the inn-keeper and his family set before us. The arrival of the coach was naturally the only event which stirred the languid monotony of their existence. Each passenger received more than a friend's welcome and was expected to contribute his share to the stock of news for which Malmani thirsted. The last stage of our journey was accomplished in a dust-storm, and, as we ploughed our way through it, I learned the height, breadth, and depth of superlative

discomfort. Blown by the east wind over the wide plains, the dust of South Africa out-rivals all the dust in the world in power of penetration and in restless abundance. For the very earth is dust. The countless generations that hunted and died thereon are dust—dust, in the form of a fine red sand, which, in the evening of the year, seems to borrow the feet of the wind, as if it would claim the living before their time. Not until sundown did we sight Mafeking and descend from the coach in a spirit of devout thankfulness, though physically almost beyond recognition. As an experience, however, the coach journey was well worth the brief spell of privation it entailed.

The first thing that strikes one on arriving there from Johannesburg is that Mafeking is a British settlement. You may observe the fact with relief, if you be a patriot, or with mere indifference, if you be a traveller, but the conviction is irresistible. For this half-way house between the South and North has the atmosphere of an English country-town, leavened with the decorous energy of a rising commercial centre. It is tranquil, tidy, and conventional, yet its spirit is unanimously progressive—so pro-

gressive that our host, Mr. Julius Weil, who has represented Mafeking in two Cape Parliaments, was re-elected without opposition, though the fact is perhaps due more to his personal popularity than to the political prepossessions of his constituents. Yet the white population of Mafeking, some fifteen hundred souls, can give a good report of their citizenship. They can point to four churches, a race-course, three schools, a town hall, a club, and all the social and civic features of modern life, save only the electric light, which the Town Council cannot make up its mind to afford. Considering that less than twelve years ago the beasts of the field wandered unmolested across the site of the Market Square, the prosperity of Mafeking, largely due to its increasing trade with the North, says much for the enterprise of its makers. They have done all things decently, and in order, and still they have done things, with the result that Mafeking reminds one of a British pocket borough, in spite of the fact that four out of every five wayfarers are Baralong natives.

Slightly to the North-west of the British settlement lies the native location, or Stadt, as it is called here, in the valley of the attenuated

stream named the Molopo River. Among the trees that fringe its banks, hundreds of kraals are scattered, looking like a colony of gigantic bee-hives, with their circular walls of baked red earth, roofed over with a thick thatch of rushes. Therein, between four thousand and five thousand Baralongs live in idleness and amity. The Baralongs are, physically speaking, an inferior race, not conspicuous for either muscle or energy, but they are an amiable people, and remarkably quick to adopt the ideas and habits of civilisation. At that moment the Baralong tribe had fallen on evil days. The rinderpest robbed them of ninety-eight per cent. of their cattle, which calamity has reduced them from affluence to poverty. In addition to this, their chief, Wessels, is a drunken and degraded ruffian, whose reign has given the Baralongs ceaseless cause to regret the golden days of his wise and prosperous father, Montsioa. Fortunately, Montsioa's brother left two sons, who are now virtually, if not nominally, the rulers of the people.

The Baralongs may also congratulate themselves on the possession of a Civil Commissioner, who governs them with sympathy and understanding. Mr. Bell's long experience of native



ances, and knowledge of their language, has enabled him to win their respect and confidence. Through his influence I was able to hold an interesting conversation with Likoko and Silas, and to inspect the interiors of the kraals, which astonished me by their perfect cleanliness. Each kraal is surrounded by an enclosed court-yard, where the women and children sit during the day, and where the cooking operations are performed. The house, itself, contains two or three rooms, and, save for the absence of windows, is much more comfortable than the average English labourer's cottage, and certainly cleaner. The bedroom of the kraal which I inspected contained a brass bedstead, and this, Mr. Bell informed me, was the rule among what may be called the Baralong aristocracy. Likoko, the Chief Regent, lives in a brick house, supplied with windows, and furnished like an English dwelling. There were pictures on the walls, letters on the table, a tea-pot on the hearth, and no saving vestige of picturesque barbarism anywhere. Within his domain is a kraal which is used as a granary. The corn is deposited in a huge circular vat about six feet in diameter, made by the natives out of earth and strips of raw hide. It is a

marvellous construction but, at present, as Silas explained in excellent English, it is useless, for there is no corn to husband. That was a lean year for the Baralong.

The situation of Mafeking, almost on the border of that anomalous region known as the Bechuanaland Protectorate, furnishes another reason why the traveller should linger there a while. Space forbids me to detail, even in outline, the curious history of Bechuanaland during the ten years that elapsed between the date of Sir Charles Warren's Expedition and the Act of the British Parliament passed in the Session of 1895, by which a portion of Bechuanaland became a Crown Colony. At the same time the protecting arm of Her Majesty the Queen was extended over the remaining area, which, not having been acquired by conquest or by occupation, could not, in like manner, be added to the British Empire. The Act defined the territories wherein the native Chiefs Khama, Sebele, and Batheon should continue to reign, assisted by the counsels of a Resident Imperial Officer, and the vigilance of the Imperial police, drafted over from the British Bechuanaland Protectorate. In the person of the Resident

Commissioner was vested, not merely the office of Administrator, but also the offices of Judge and Treasurer, as well. The only thing that can be urged in defence of this triune authority is that it is cheap, for, among the white population over which it is exercised, it has long been a cause of dissatisfaction and, as far as the administration of justice is concerned, a growing scandal, which the Imperial Government will sooner or later have to take cognizance of. To begin with, the judicial machinery is wholly inadequate. In civil cases the only appeal from the verdict of the Resident Commissioner is to the Privy Council, which, as it necessitates a deposit of £500, is obviously inaccessible to the average litigant. On the other hand, in criminal cases, which are tried by the Resident Commissioner and two Assessors, there is no appeal, save to the High Commissioner at Cape Town, and through him to the Colonial Secretary. That such absolute powers should be vested in one individual is in itself a circumstance prejudicial to the interests of justice, but this danger could certainly be minimised by the appointment of a Commissioner who has legal experience, or who is, at least, a Civil Servant. The present

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Commissioner is, however, a soldier who was sent to demarcate the boundaries of the native territory, antecedent to the Act of 1895. Although no doubt a gallant officer, he is lacking both in legal knowledge and in official training. It is scarcely surprising, therefore, that during his tenure of office some amazing verdicts have aroused considerable indignation among the inhabitants. Justice is apt to become rather an uncertain quantity when its administration is left in the hands of men who, however well-disposed, are unqualified for the discharge of such complicated duties.

On my return from Rhodesia, I rested the soles of my feet once more in Bechuanaland. Vryburg, a dreary little village, composed of an avenue of pepper trees flanked by two rows of tin shanties, is situated on the edge of that portion of the veldt which formerly constituted the Republic of Stellaland, and is now the Crown Colony of Bechuanaland. Since Mr. Rhodes met the Boer freebooter, Van Niekerk, on the banks of the Hartz River fifteen years ago, and frustrated his intention of adding Stellaland to the Transvaal dominions, no-one has ever paid much attention to Vryburg. On the occasion

of my visit, Vryburg was in the throes of the general election. Mr. Rhodes had promised to address the electors on behalf of the Progressive candidates, and his presence on the scene of his former triumph was expected to destroy the last hope of the Bond, one of whose candidates had died since nomination, but who was, according to the strange procedure of this country, still eligible for election. Two days before the fatal morning consecrated to the recording of votes, Mr. Rhodes arrived, accompanied by Mr. Lawrence, one of the members for Kimberley, Mr. Francis Oates, a director of the De Beers, and Captain Tyson, the genial manager of the Kimberley club. We all ate together that evening the very worst dinner that Africa could produce, and thereafter adjourned to the platform, gay with flickering scraps of bunting. A considerable crowd had already congregated around it, chiefly composed of farmers, who represent the voting power of Bechuanaland.

Mr. Rhodes is not a fluent speaker at any time. There is no suggestion of eloquence in the terse, ragged, sentences which he jerks at his audience. They lack the corrosive sting of satire and even the clarion note of a great enthusiasm.

Oratorically considered, Mr. Rhodes's speeches are about as imperfect as they well could be, yet they do not altogether miss their mark. Something of the force and energy of the man is translated into those staccato phrases, and generates a certain current of electric fusion between him and the listening crowd. I can still see their hard, heavy, faces within the radius of the flaming lamps, upturned with a wavering expression of disgust and admiration. As the words fell from Mr. Rhodes's lips they were translated, sentence by sentence, into Dutch, a process irritating enough to disconcert a Demosthenes. Every now and then a voice in the crowd would interject a remark, but without any appearance of hostility. It was a sober company, come to hear what the Arch Enemy had to say, in grim and desperate earnestness. And, as he continued to speak, it seemed to me that they dimly detected the presence of an essential sympathy, which revealed him at heart their friend, and demonstrated that such enmity as there might be was purely accidental. And verily Mr. Rhodes has much more in common with the sons of the soil than with the clamorous, gold-seeking Uitlander, whom he only began to

use when the farmer became intractable. In his strange, complex, character that deep-seated sentiment of the earth, that love of the land, will never really be quenched by the Moloch of Imperial expansion. Thus, on that still night in Vryburg, I watched that phenomenon take place which is the last reward of the orator—the triumph of the communicable unsaid. Into the dull wits of the Bechuanaland farmers there filtered the conviction that the speaker and they were one. And they are one—with a difference. Mr. Cecil Rhodes is an elemental with a passion for power, while the Dutch farmer is an elemental with a passion for peace.

On the morrow followed a dinner with Mr. Rhodes and his party in the De Beers Travelling Car, and then—the southward mail.

## CHAPTER VI.

## THE EVOLUTION OF RHODESIA.

THOUGH the Sebakwe River, which forms the boundary line between Matabeleland and Mashonaland, is an arbitrary and in no way a natural frontier, it may be accepted as the visible sign of certain divergences of character and interest which exist between the two Provinces of Rhodesia. The more Eastern of these, called Mashonaland, is the elder of the two, having been occupied on September 12, 1890, consequent on the granting of a concession by Lobengula to Mr. Rudd and others, then, as now, closely associated with Mr. Rhodes. This document gave "complete and exclusive charge over all metals and minerals situated and contained in my Kingdom, Principalities, and Dominions, together with full power to do all things that they may deem necessary to win and procure same." By virtue of "these presents" Mashonaland was brought within the



white man's influence just nine years ago, and at least three years before the first tent was pitched at Bulawayo.

Its tardy development, as compared with the sister Province, is not, however, very difficult to explain. In the first place, the early pioneers had little or no experience of mining, and the two years which followed their advent were practically wasted in fruitless prospecting and in the indiscriminate pegging of claims. Subsequently, men who possessed experience as well as an enterprising spirit arrived and reported favourably on the country. But, owing to the impossibility of bringing up mining machinery, practical evidence in support of their opinion was not forthcoming. All attempts to transport mining plant from the East coast ended in lamentable failure. Man and beast alike perished in the feverish swamps of the Portugese territory, which was infested with the tsetse fly. Until quite recently, travellers by rail might see abandoned cargoes of costly mining materials rotting in the rank vegetation, a testimony to the valiant efforts of the early settlers to overcome insuperable difficulties. All attempts to bring machinery from Johannesburg by way of Tuli

and Victoria proved equally disastrous. The enormous weight of the loads broke down the ox-waggons, sometimes in the middle of the veldt or in the deep river drifts, and raised the price of transport to the fantastic rate of £60 per ton. But as soon as the absolute impossibility of opening up the country without a railway had impressed itself on the inhabitants of Salisbury the first Matabele war broke out. In response to an urgent appeal from Mr. Rhodes they left their homes and mines, and marched westward, six hundred strong, including the Victoria Contingent, to subdue the Matabele. When this object had been effected, a number of these volunteers showed a disposition to remain where they were. If the suggestion to abandon Salisbury and to found a township on the site of Lobengula's kraal did not actually emanate from Mr. Rhodes, it is certain that the managers of those companies virtually controlled by him were the first to act on the proposal. That he recognised the splendid services rendered by the volunteers from Mashonaland was proved by his speech when he returned to Cape Town at the termination of the war. Testimony to their courage and endurance is, however, all that

those who, believing in the superior wealth and fertility of Mashonaland, elected to return thither, have to thank him for.

From the moment, in fact, when Mr. Rhodes realised that the development of Mashonaland by means of a railway which would connect it with the East coast might arouse a feeling of antagonism at the Cape, the expansion of the Eastern province of Rhodesia has been deliberately retarded. Beira, which is only three hundred and eighty miles from Salisbury, is beyond all question the natural highway into Rhodesia ; yet, though the extension of the line from Vryburg to Bulawayo, a distance of five hundred miles, has been completed with a 3 feet 6 in. gauge in two years, the trumpery 2 feet gauge line, only two hundred and twenty miles in length, from Beira to Umtali, has taken four years to construct. The extension to Salisbury, a further distance of one hundred and seventy miles, reached its terminus in May of last year, but the difference in gauge has as yet enormously discounted its utility.

Since I returned from Africa the directors of the Beira Railway Company have decided to undertake immediately the substitution of the

3 feet 6 in. gauge for the 2 feet gauge which at present prevails from Beira to Umtali. Until this project is completed there is little chance of the high rates of transport being appreciably reduced. In a conversation I had at Beira with the contractor, Mr. George Pauling, he explained to me the immense increase in working expenses occasioned by the narrow gauge. Apparently it takes eight trains, running an average of only eighty miles a day, to accomplish in three days a journey of two hundred miles, which is easily performed in one day by one train on the 3 feet 6 in. gauge. Thus, as each train requires a driver, stoker, and guard, seventy-two men are employed on the narrow gauge to do the work of three on the wider line. This, then, supplies the reason that the Beira Railway charges £11 per ton to carry goods over two hundred and twenty miles, which can be transported from Port Elizabeth to Bulawayo, a distance of one thousand three hundred and sixty miles, for £16 per ton. In addition to this there exists a measurement tariff on the Beira line, which brings the rates for bulky goods to three times that amount.

Since my talk with Mr. Pauling, another

factor which will scarcely conduce to the appreciable lowering of rates on the Mashonaland continuation of the line, whose starting is Umtali, has come into existence. I refer to the Rhodesian Railway Trust, a company formed under the chairmanship of Mr. Rhodes, wherein all large shareholders in the Bechuanaland and Mashonaland Railways have consented to pool their shares. This "corner" will thus be able to prevent the inauguration of any rate-cutting system that would give the Mashonaland Railway an advantage over the line which leads from Cape Town to Bulawayo. The infinitely shorter route into Rhodesia from the East coast, added to the Portuguese transit duty of 3 per cent.—the Cape duty now being  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent.—naturally attract the British and foreign importer. The Rhodesian Railway Trust can, by keeping up the rates on the Mashonaland Railway and incidentally on the Beira Railway (the majority of whose shares are already in the hands of the Chartered Company), impose an effectual check upon this diversion of traffic so detrimental to the Cape Colony. The railway to Bulawayo cost about £2,000,000. According to Mr. Pauling, who has practically a monopoly of railway con-

tracting in South Africa, the extension to Tanganyika will cost double that sum, or about £7000 per mile. Beyond Lo Magondi the country is, he said, very hilly, and much of it, especially in the Zambesi Valley, so fever-stricken that his firm reckon to lose fifty per cent. of their operatives. I observed that it had been represented to Sir Michael Hicks Beach that the cost of the extension would not exceed the cost of the Bechuanaland Railway, namely, £3,300 per mile. To this Mr. Pauling replied emphatically that his terms were £4,000,000 and that he would not undertake the contract for less.

Although the Imperial Government have not given the guarantee which Mr. Rhodes requested, the line will within a measurable time be continued to Gwelo. This little township is situated in the heart of one of the richest mining districts, and it is further proposed to connect the line from Gwelo to Lo Magondi, thus tapping the extensive coalfields on the Omay River. A branch line thence to Salisbury would be the means of supplying both Mashonaland and Matabeleland with cheap coal. It would, moreover, connect the whole of Rhodesia with

the East coast, thus rendering it independent of the Cape Colony. The mere initiation of such a scheme would do more than anything else to show Mr. Hofmeyr and his followers the advantages of a policy of amalgamation. The carrying trade of the Cape Government Railways is already languishing on account of the rivalry of the Durban and Delagoa Bay route, another demonstration that this line is, beyond Kimberley, a purely artificial means of communication. The £2,000,000 that went in the construction of the Bechuanaland Railway would have opened up the entire area of Rhodesia. As it is, Mr. Rhodes has consistently sacrificed the interests of Mashonaland for the sake of inducing the Colonial Afrikaner to fly into the fold of progress on the wings of cupidity. The moral of the last Cape elections affords, however, rather a neat illustration of the futility of trying to gather grapes off your neighbour's thorns.

Although the ultimate destiny of Rhodesia is still on the knees of the gods, its success and the vindication of the Chartered Company's position depends primarily on the proof of its mineral wealth. Since I left Rhodesia, the faith of the pioneer has been to a certain extent confirmed



and the doubts of the public as to the existence of gold have been at least partially dissipated. The results of the first year's crushings from the Geelong, Selukwe, Dunraven, and Bonsor Mines gives an average return of  $11\frac{1}{2}$  dwts. of gold to the ton, and, although not even the most sanguine believer in Rhodesia would vaunt it as a second Witwatersrand, this average compares favourably with the Rand average of 9.85 dwts. The enormous area of Rhodesia, 750,000 square miles in extent, is of course a great point in favour of the existence of payable gold on many of the one hundred and fifty thousand mining claims already pegged out and registered on the lines of the ancient workings. Upon these claims 2,500 miles of quartz reef have now been discovered in Matabeleland alone all of which is, though much only infinitesimally, auriferous. It is, moreover, improbable that the ancients were able to locate all the gold-bearing reefs in the country. The discovery of virgin reefs awaits the prospector of the future.

On the Rand, the length of the reef is estimated at about thirty miles, of which rather less than half is being worked. Those who are inclined to attach much weight to a vague and



general scepticism may reflect that the disbelievers in Rhodesia are as nought when compared to the weight of expert opinion that derided the Rand in the days of its infancy.

From January to June of the past year, the total output of Rhodesia was 36,204 ozs. With regard to the average of  $11\frac{1}{2}$  dwts. extracted, it must be remembered that these returns were obtained without the assistance of cyanide plant or slimes treatment. As Mr. Rhodes pointed out at the last meeting of the Chartered Company:—

“We may calculate on 4 or 5 dwts. more per ton with cyanide, while the cost of treatment by cyanide is about 1 dwt. per ton. You may thus add to the  $11\frac{1}{2}$  dwts. an extra profit of 4 dwts. when using the cyanide process. That would be 14s. at 3s. 6d. the dwt., but say 10s. You can add on to the result I have mentioned 10s. per ton at least.”

The eventual value of the gold-bearing area in Rhodesia depends as much on the facilities for working the mines as on the richness of the ore. On the four mines aforesaid the cost of working varies from 21s. to 27s. per ton. Cheapness is, of course, the premier consideration. The chief factors in the determination of working expenses are the possibilities of obtaining

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water, timber and coal, explosives and labour, at a low rate. With regard to most of these necessities, Rhodesia is more favourably situated than the Rand. Though the innumerable tributaries of the Zambesi, the Gwai, and the Limpopo rivers intersect almost the whole area of Matabeleland with a network of *spruits*, many of these are dry during part of the year. The construction of dams, however, near those mines which are unfavourably situated with regard to the rivers, may be trusted to overcome this difficulty. As regards timber, the whole veldt is overgrown with brushwood and trees which make for utility rather than for beauty, and are thus ready to the miner's hand. When the supply is exhausted—as with the development of the mines it will eventually be—the coalfields in the neighbourhood of Tuli, extending over an area of 8000 acres, will be connected with the Bechuanaland Railway. In addition to this, there are the extensive coal-beds that follow the course of the Zambesi, near which the proposed extension of the railway to Tanganyika should pass. This coal is, at the least, equal in quality to the Transvaal product. But the most obvious advantage which Rhodesia possesses over the

Rand is in the cost of dynamite. No. 1 dynamite can be delivered in Bulawayo at 48s. 3d. per case, and blasting gelatine, proved equal in strength to Nobel's preparation, at 63s. 6d. For the Transvaal the prices are 75s. and 97s. 6d. respectively. Furthermore, the cost of living is no dearer in Bulawayo than it is in Johannesburg, in spite of its greater distance from the coast.

When one comes to the consideration of the last factor necessary to the swift and economical working of the mines in Matabeleland, the problem of native labour has to be faced. Herein lies the greatest difficulty, and one which the Chamber of Mines at Bulawayo had, at the time of my visit, made no serious effort to solve. So far its members had confined their energies to expressing in acrimonious correspondence with the Administrator their opinion that the Chartered Company ought to organise and maintain a department through which an adequate and permanent labour supply might be obtained. But "while it is prepared to co-operate with and assist any approved scheme organised by the Chamber of Mines," the Company does not see why it should play the part of either initiator or

banker. The Chamber has, however, no intention of doing anything for itself that it can persuade Mr. Rhodes to do for it, and so the matter hangs on until a desperate emergency renders immediate action imperative. Besides the difficulty of getting enough "boys," the imperative question of cost arises. The Matabele will not work regularly below the surface. The East Coast natives find Mashonaland, where there is an increasing demand, much nearer; and the surplus drifts away to the Rand. Since Mr. Rhodes' Fingo scheme has failed, hopes are entertained of obtaining Barotse natives from beyond the Zambesi through the instrumentality of Major Coryndon, who is in command of the police force in that region. All proposals for securing a supply from India or the West Indies are vetoed on the score of expense. It is obviously more than time that the Bulawayo Chamber of Mines abandoned its supine attitude and devised some plan for solving this problem in conjunction with the Government. At present, 40s. a head per month represents the average cost of native labour, which compares favourably with the Rand reckoning of 75s. If, finally, an average working cost of 23s. per

ton can be maintained, the mines in Matabeleland may yet realise the hopes of their most sanguine promoters.

As regards its mineral resources, Mashonaland is at least as rich in gold as Matabeleland. This statement has received the endorsement of Mr. John Hays Hammond, whose word carries weight everywhere. It is to be regretted that a few of the companies have suspended their development work until such time as the railway comes to their assistance with reduced transport rates. On many of the mines, however, the advent of crushing machinery is being energetically anticipated. The "Alliance" Mine, belonging to the United Excelsior Mines, one of the most promising properties in the country, will shortly be ready for the battery. Other properties which have responded well to preliminary examination, and which are now in process of development, are the "Beatrice," formerly the property of the Mashonaland Central Gold Mining Company, the "Inez" and the "Lion," belonging to the United Rhodesia Goldfields, and the "Last Chance" and "Primrose," owned by the French South African Development Company.

In Mashonaland the native labour question,

that has proved such a stumbling-block in Bulawayo, is in a fair way to solution. With the co-operation of the Chartered Company, who have guaranteed the cost of erecting a compound, the Salisbury Chamber of Mines have organised a system which has been working satisfactorily for the past fifteen months. The Native Commissioners send out agents, and the boys are supplied to the mines on commission as required. The Shangani, from the East Coast, trained under Portuguese rule, is a much better worker than the raw aborigine of the interior, as he is, generally speaking, more docile and intelligent.

As soon as the psychological moment arrives, certain modifications in the existing Mining Law, already recommended to the Chartered Company, will be urged with insistence. According to the regulations now in force, the Company can take fifty per cent. of the vendor's interest in every company floated as a gold mining company. Though the amount set aside for working capital is not subject to this tax, no allowance is made for the cost of promotion. For instance, in a company floated with a nominal capital of £100,000, of which £40,000

is reserved as working capital, the Chartered Company have the right to £30,000 in shares out of the remaining £60,000. But if the vendor has to pay twenty per cent. for promotion, as frequently happens, he is left with only thirty per cent. of what he considers the value of his property. This objection, however, is not the strongest that is urged against this clause in the Mining Law. The fact that the Chartered Company has never insisted on more than thirty per cent. of the vendor's scrip, demonstrates that it recognises a fifty per cent. tax as excessive. If an uniform reduction to thirty per cent. had in all cases been made, no one would show any concern for the letter of the law. This is not, however, the case. The amount exacted has varied in a manner which has naturally aroused great dissatisfaction among those who have not sufficient personal influence with the directors to get off at twenty per cent. In several cases a rebate to this extent has been granted, and in one case to as low as ten per cent. Consequently, those who have had to pay thirty per cent. feel that they have a grievance. The directors would be well advised to impose a uniform tax, whatever it is, and if, as it appears,



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they realise that to take half is to take too much, they would lose nothing by altering the terms of the code, and making the new regulation universally applicable.

From the point of view of agriculture, the future of Rhodesia is as yet problematical. Whether these leagues of uncultivated veldt will ever produce the kindly fruits of the earth in anything like sufficient quantity to nourish her inhabitants, is a question which only the future can answer. It is Mr. Rhodes's favourite boast that over a thousand Transvaal burghers have already forsaken the South African Republic to settle within the Chartered Company's dominions. But, whatever the Boer farmer does, he certainly does not till the soil. His efforts at agriculture are confined to the plantation of a mealie garden, which serves for the sustenance of himself and family. From time to time English and Scottish farmers drift north of the Limpopo, and have done, especially in Mashonaland, a great deal to justify the opinion that agriculture in Rhodesia is not a forlorn hope. To the emigrant, Mashonaland is, if not an Eldorado, a land susceptible of profitable farming under healthy conditions of life. In the



Charter district, and also at Enkeldoorn and Melsetter, considerable tracts are under cultivation, though the farms have scarcely yet recovered from the devastation which the rebellion left behind it. There is fifty per cent. more water in Mashonaland than in the rest of Rhodesia and, consequently, a much greater natural fertility than in Matabeleland, where the farming operations are on a very small scale, although, near Bulawayo, forage and vegetables are now grown at a profit.

In both provinces, however, the greatest enemies of the agriculturist are the white ants and the locusts. These rapacious insects will devour, in a very short time, whole crops raised by months of patient toil. Nor is the breeding of horses and cattle attended with fewer difficulties, for almost every animal in South Africa is subject to a disease peculiar to its kind, from which it has hitherto been impossible to protect it. But since the terrible visitation of rinderpest in 1896, the Government of the Cape Colony has spared no expense in its efforts to stimulate scientific research to the discovery of a cure for this and kindred scourges. The success which has followed the experiments

in the inoculation of cattle has been so encouraging that Mr. Rhodes recently expressed his conviction that, in course of time, this plague would be completely stamped out. If this process is as successful in the destruction of locusts as it has been in the preservation of cattle, the two great scourges which have nearly driven the Rhodesian farmer to despair will have been overcome. I have seen a photograph representing a field covered with myriads of dead locusts, a result obtained by inoculating three insects. The natives cherish a belief that locusts disappear after seven years of destructive activity for a similar period. As it is just that time since the first flight visited Rhodesia, there will now be an opportunity of testing the justice of this belief. At least, the danger of fever does not threaten the settler who chooses the uplands of Mashonaland for his home. His children should flourish like his crops.

The long drawn-out dispute respecting the farms in Matabeleland acquired by the volunteers who joined the expedition during the first war, under the Victoria agreement of 1893, has fortunately arrived at a settlement by compromise. Besides the right to peg out twenty

claims and a share of the loot, this agreement provided that each volunteer should receive, in return for his services, a farm of three thousand *morgen* in extent—a *morgen* being equal to two acres. A right of expropriation at the rate of £3 per *morgen*, however, was reserved to the Chartered Company, but, owing to the careless wording of the agreement, a variance of opinion as to the terms of expropriation arose. The Company maintained its title to buy out only such portions of the farm as had been pegged out as mining claims, while the present owners contended that the whole three thousand *morgen*, if any, should be expropriated at a cost of £9000. It should, however, be pointed out that the present owners are not, with very few exceptions, the volunteers to whom this grant was originally made. Most of these pioneers disposed of their interests for sums varying from £50 to £300 at the termination of the war, to any one who would buy them. These lands are now almost entirely in the hands of companies, who have neither a body to be shot at nor, presumably, a conscience to be squared. Until quite recently, most of them were determined to exact their full pound of flesh; but in January

of 1898, a meeting, at which Mr. Rhodes was present with Sir Thomas Scanlen, Judge Vintcent, and Captain Lawley, took place, and it was resolved that such expropriation should in each case be subject to arbitration, since which time the resolution has been ratified by the London board, and the volunteers or their descendants ought to be amply contented therewith.

## CHAPTER VII.

## THE CHARTERED COMPANY AND MR. RHODES.

THE recent publication of a Blue Book, in which the accounts and estimates of the British South Africa Company for the years 1896 to 1900 are set forth, enables the public to form a more just appreciation of its work and position than has hitherto been possible. Both by Little Englanders in this country, and by malcontents in Rhodesia, the Chartered Company has of late been made the object of furious, and frequently unmerited, criticism. Let us consider for a moment the relations of the Company to Rhodesia and the relations of both to the British Empire whose territory has been thereby increased to the extent of nearly a million square miles. It is now close upon ten years since a small body of financiers, with Mr. Rhodes at their head, obtained a Royal Charter giving them administrative control over a vast region in unexplored Africa. In the exercise of the functions

then granted to them, the British South Africa Company has created out of that desert the twin provinces of Rhodesia, at an approximate cost of £7,000,000. Thus it will be seen that Matabeleland and Mashonaland are not, and never have been, Crown Colonies developed at the expense of the British tax-payer, but a private estate administered and controlled, under the supervision of the Imperial Government, by the shareholders in a financial undertaking, and up to the present time with no financial benefit to themselves. An analysis of the accounts as they are presented to Parliament, shows very clearly that, considered as a commercial enterprise, the British South Africa Company has not as yet proved a success. At the end of ten years' management of Rhodesia it has to confront its shareholders with a deficit of five and a half millions sterling, produced by the fact that its expenditure has always been immeasurably in excess of its revenue. Under the former head comes, of course, the cost of government, consisting of the administration of the country, the maintenance of its police force, roads, post and telegraphs, etc. No exact distinction is made in the Company's accounts between administrative

and commercial expenditure, but all outgoings, grouped together, reach the formidable sum of £4,152,655, exclusive of the £2,689,323 which it cost to subdue the Matabele rebellion of 1896. Against this colossal disbursement two classes of revenue appear in the balance sheet. The first of these is derived from the ordinary sources of direct and indirect taxation, such as railway revenue, customs, licenses, stamp and transfer duties on land and mines, amounting in all to £1,601,564. Beyond this sum £448,411 profit has accrued to the Company from the sale of town lots and lands, which, in the case of a Crown Colony, would answer to the description of Crown Lands or public property. Compare these figures, and you are left with a balance of £5,698,825 on the wrong side. Such, so far, is the financial situation to which the Chartered Company's solicitude for the expansion of the British Empire has brought it.

It is obvious that if the investors who have sunk seven millions in the development of a new country were to face an irrevocable loss of by far the greater portion of that sum, the majority would speedily come to the conclusion that empire-making was too expensive a form of

patriotism. The continuation of the British South Africa Company as an active association depends principally upon the power of the directors to infect the general body of shareholders with their optimistic views concerning the possibilities of Rhodesia. In view of the rapid progress the country has recently made towards the realisation of these hopes, this task should not be difficult, nor, indeed, is it, for the hostility displayed towards the Chartered Company does not come principally from those of its own household. The two sources most likely to contribute to its financial stability in the future are the mineral wealth of Rhodesia, and its railways. How large an interest the Company holds in the present and prospective gold output I have already demonstrated, but with regard to this asset I may further remark that if only one per cent. of the 156,235 claims already pegged out, representing 4438 miles of reef, is proved to contain payable gold, Rhodesia will have begun her era of prosperity. For this one per cent. would mean forty-five miles of productive gold mines, which would alone assure a dividend to the patient investors in the Chartered Company. Turning to the railways, the outlook is



even more promising. The extension of the Bechuanaland Railway, which reached Bulawayo about two years ago, shows a steady growth in net earnings from £11,877 to £99,290 within a period of four years. Taking the returns for the first eight months of last year as a basis, the net profits for 1899 should exceed £120,000. The continuation, already begun, to Gwelo and the Mashonaland Railway are also potential sources of considerable revenue.

It is thus evident to an unprejudiced mind that the Chartered Company's directors have a reason for the hope that is in them. As a governing body they have made some grievous mistakes, but I have yet to meet a Rhodesian sufficiently dissatisfied with their administration to be anxious to exchange it for that of the Imperial Government. The day will no doubt dawn when Rhodesia will be added to the self-governing colonies of the British Empire. In anticipation of that time a Legislative Council has been established, consisting of the Administrators, the Resident Commissioner, and nine other members, of which five are nominated by the Company, and four are elected by the inhabitants. Although the Council has only sat for a

few months, violent differences of opinion have already arisen between the nominated and the elected members, chiefly in connection with the new customs ordinance which has, by means of the majority, been imposed upon the people to their intense indignation. A country in which the entire population is composed of consumers, is apt to take very ill any attempt to increase, however slightly, the cost of living therein. But this opposition does not spring from an objection to the principle of taxation. It has been produced by a clause in the ordinance which exempts all products imported from the States forming the South African Customs Union from any duty whatever, and is the expression of a sentiment of hostility towards the Cape which has become almost universal in Rhodesia. The inhabitants of the British South Africa Company's dominions are intensely anglophile in their sympathies, and this feeling has been aggravated by the belief, not without foundation, that Mr. Rhodes has systematically sacrificed their interests to retain his influence with the Dutch party at the Cape. The tariff is almost identical with that of the Customs Union Convention, save that a few articles of food, notably coffee and cheese, duti-

able under the Convention, escape taxation in Rhodesia. It is very anomalous, however, that food stuffs carried over sea, like potted and tinned provisions, largely consumed in the North, should be more heavily taxed than, say, furniture, plate, jewellery, and kindred luxuries, and that English preserves and spirits should be handicapped in favour of the inferior colonial brands. In addition to this "most favoured nation" treatment the Cape Government receives fifteen per cent. of the customs' receipts as a commission for collecting them.

Let the dissatisfied Rhodesian, however, possess his soul in patience until such time as he is ready to assume the task of self-government, which in this case means until he is in a position to take over in the form of a national debt the deficit of five and a half millions which now confronts the shareholder in the Chartered Company, and further, to provide the sinews, not of war, but of peace. They who pay the piper call the tune—a homely platitude which is as true in its application to the vast theme of colonial expansion as elsewhere. Up to the present, and some way into the future, the British South Africa Company have paid the

piper, and will continue to pay him. And so long as it still bears the burden incidental to the government and development of its immense property, it has a perfect right to impose such restrictions on the inhabitants of Rhodesia as will prevent its shareholders sinking under the weight of that load. As for the Little Englanders, who constantly carp at the great powers wielded by the Chartered Company, I would bid them glance in the direction of New South Wales, whose expansion into a thriving colony cost their fathers £10,000,000 and was stigmatised by its early governors as a worthless incumbrance. To-day its trade is valued at £100,000,000 a year, while its citizens number 4,000,000. Rhodesia has, so far, cost the British tax-payer nothing, and may in future bring as much as New South Wales to the Imperial treasury.

And in that future the name of Cecil Rhodes will be set with the names of those who have spent the best years of their manhood that England might endure and expand continually. Regarding the moral worth of that singular man, who more than any other in South Africa may be called the maker of it, an almost savage

diversity of opinion exists. It is probable, indeed, that few of those who seized the sceptre which all men are grappling for, have escaped the obloquy of that section of society which surveys its generation with the eye, not of the philosopher, but of the moralist. But the fact remains that empires are not made with the blood of men who bring every action into line with an inflexible standard of abstract right and wrong. Viewed from this plane there is scarcely a great man in the annals of history against whom the Nonconformist conscience of his day did not hurl the charge of unscrupulousness. In England, more than in any other country, the moral point of view over-rides the philosophic. France with her passion for "*la gloire*" has long since cast away the seven deadly virtues with those who practise them. In Germany, the moral point of view is the monopoly of an Emperor who desires to rule the souls as well as the bodies of his subjects, and yet keeps on speaking terms with God. But even in England it takes a Gladstone to force the moralists' code upon the Councils of State. So far as it has regulated our relations with the Transvaal, we have since repented in dust and ashes the fact that we ever

permitted ourselves to be influenced thereby. As a people we generally exhaust our moral principles by talking about them, and delight to honour those statesmen and soldiers who have helped us to sustain more than the second part of the national legend. And if any should blame us, is there not our country's coat-of-arms with "Dieu" before "mon droit" as a check on the predatory instincts of the lion and the unicorn ?

Yet they are there, those predatory instincts, goaded ever by the spectre of an over-crowded England in which there is no longer standing room. We do not look close, it may be, into the manner of our conquests, reflecting how very essential a few loose-boxes are to us. In Africa there is abundant space for our recklessly begotten progeny, and to the person who has demonstrated the fact we are grateful. If, as in December 1895, he sought to add to the pleasing prospect another loose-box which contained a great deal of gold, we reprovèd his haste and indiscretion, and now wish to hear nothing more about it, especially as subsequent events seem to point to the conclusion that the people who have the golden box do not know

how to take care of it. We shall not take it from them, of course. We shall only reiterate loud enough for all the world to hear that Cecil Rhodes is a very great man indeed.

And putting aside the fulsome adulation of the sycophants who surround him, and the venom of those whom he has incensed or alienated, there remains a man "more than common tall" among his peers, and a very giant among his associates. There is in Mr. Rhodes's character, beyond his undoubted genius for finance, an element of real greatness. His enthusiasm for that blend of sublime ideal and fatuous sham which we call the Imperial Idea, is a sincere enthusiasm. To him England writ large over the continent of Africa is a cult, not a stalking horse. He has neither part nor lot in the sordid ambitions of his followers, whom he uses as lions use jackals. The colossal fortune which he has amassed gives him no personal pleasure—his tastes are of the simplest—but it has helped him further towards the goal of his ambition than any other weapon could have done. That profound conviction that men can be most easily ruled through their vices, which is so characteristic of him, made him realise how

great an advantage an impregnable financial position might be in the game of party politics ; for, if a subventioned God of Battles does not insure victory it, at least, minimises defeat.

The quality, moreover, of Mr. Rhodes's genius is not original ; nothing that he has done—not even the amalgamation of the De Beers—was of his own devising, though he has always done more than put salt on the tail of other men's ideas. An original conception is of but little value compared with that integrating power, that acumen which evolves and achieves. And this is Mr. Rhodes's great strength—an irresistible creative energy which subdues obstacles by the sheer force of its impact upon them, an energy infused with I know not what of the dramatic, of the heroic, which appeals to the imagination of men even while it fails to convince their reason. We are a sentimental race, with all our talent for shop-keeping, and to a people in whom both these attributes are conspicuous, the work done by Mr. Rhodes for the Empire, and the work as yet only projected by him, seems good. Add to this insistent planting of the Union Jack—this opening up of new fields for our commerce—occasional bursts of



signal, if capricious, generosity, and the reason why the belief in Mr. Rhodes has crossed six thousand miles of sea grows plain. The objects for which he has sacrificed the confidence of the Dutch in South Africa seem great and glorious objects, and in a measure they are so. For the rest, the principle that the end justifies the means is not confined to the Jesuits.

Some qualities which not only grace human character, but ennoble it, are certainly lacking in Mr. Rhodes. He is deficient in the power of sympathy, and curiously devoid of the sense of humour. So sensitive, however, is he to criticism that the mildest form of banter is intolerable to him, and this exaggerated fear of ridicule has more than once led him to regard men as enemies whose faith for a moment fell short of a belief in his absolute infallibility. Yet to those of his associates who do attain this belief, Mr. Rhodes's generosity is only equalled by his loyalty. On one occasion, at least, his friends came perilously near to blasting his whole career. But although Mr. Rhodes was the only person connected with the Raid who was really injured thereby, his sole anxiety, both at the trial and before it, was, not to evade his share of the responsibility, but to

save his egregious confederates from the *quart d'heure de Rabelais*. When the servants of Queen Victoria go each to his own place, what niche in the House of Fame will enshrine the memory of Cecil Rhodes? The worst that the historian of the future will say concerning him is that he looked neither to the right nor to the left, being indifferent to the moral aspect of any action. But the evolution of a United South Africa is neither a trivial nor an unworthy ambition, and to its accomplishment Mr. Rhodes has devoted rare qualities of mind and will, untiringly—those qualities which, for want of a closer name, we are wont to call genius.

Turning back from the contemplation of Mr. Rhodes's character to the country which bears his name, the slight friction which I observed in Bulawayo between its inhabitants and the Chartered Company is of course inevitably incidental to the development of a new country. Much of it will doubtless subside when Mashonaland as well as Matabeleland reaches the imminent gold-producing stage in its history. The reproach that it has not reached that stage before is often levelled at it, and with great injustice. When one considers the stupendous

difficulties against which its pioneers have had to contend, of which only the greatest were isolation, famine, and war, the rapidity with which both Salisbury and Bulawayo have grown into civilised communities is nothing short of marvellous. Less than six years ago Lobengula's kraal was the only habitation of man reared on the smooth veldt where the town of Bulawayo now stands, with its wide streets and its new-born brick buildings, its comfortable villas, and its racecourse.

Through the courtesy of Mr. Hirschler, whose guest I was in that youthful city of which he was elected the first mayor, I was able to obtain ocular evidence of the existence of gold in Rhodesia. The Criterion Mine which is situated on the property of "Rhodesia, Limited" is only about fourteen miles from Bulawayo. Our drive thither took us over the bare veldt, parched at that season from the long drought and varied only by a range of hills similar in formation to the Matoppos, where the famous interview between Mr. Rhodes and the *indunas* put an end to the last Matabele war. There is something imposing about these huge granite boulders piled each on the top of the other as

if by some pre-historic convulsion of Nature. One of them, Thabas Inyorka, by name, contains a stratum of white stone which has been quarried out by the efforts of "Rhodesia, Limited," and has proved invaluable for building purposes in Bulawayo. Although the main shaft of the Criterion has not yet been provided with a skip, I decided, greatly daring, on making the descent. This could only be done by climbing down a ladder which had not, unfortunately, been constructed with a view to the length of my legs. I arrived, however, at the 130 feet level undamaged, with the exception of a few bruises, and by the help of the manager returned to the surface with a piece of quartz. My trophy was then subjected to the process of crushing and panning, and my exertions were rewarded by the sight of gold, which indicated what is technically known as a 15 dwt. proposition. Regular crushing is expected to begin almost immediately, when the mine's proximity to the town and the railway will greatly facilitate its development.

I have insisted, for the purpose of lucidity, on drawing comparisons between the two Provinces of Rhodesia. I must, however, guard against producing the impression that, beyond a healthy

feeling of rivalry, there is anything like an essential antagonism in their interests. Matabeleland and Mashonaland are one country, divisible only in name. As far as the mines are concerned, they will stand or fall together. Those minor characteristics which differentiate each from the other are merely superficial qualities or accidental conditions which, so far as they affect the future of Rhodesia, will either have a temporary local influence or an abiding one, to which every portion of these 750,000 square miles will be equally sensitive.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## KIMBERLEY AS IT IS.

IT was not until I reached Kimberley that I realised wherein lay for me the enthralling interest of Africa. Not that I found it more absorbing than any other town—on the contrary. But it was there that the vast difference, both physical and psychological, which gives to every town in South Africa its own individual character, impressed me most forcibly and indelibly. For Kimberley stands apart in a “splendid isolation,” so that it almost appears to form part of another continent, certainly of another generation, with the air of one who has fought all her battles, and whose pulses now beat to the steady measure of prosperity and peace. The volcanic struggles of a community divided against itself, the race for wealth and liberty which agitates Johannesburg, and in a lesser degree Rhodesia, belong to Kimberley’s past—a past which she has outlived and almost

forgotten. Now she breathes upon another plane from which she surveys with indifference the evolution of a United South Africa, in whose agonies she has neither part nor lot. As coldly complacent as the great idol at Kamakura, Kimberley sits upon the desert, gorged with the spoils of a gigantic monopoly.\*

The thought, moreover, that she owes her security to the insatiable vanity of woman, throws a strange irony into the uses of civilisation. The late Lord Randolph Churchill deduced from this idea an essential affinity between woman and the ape, for which assertion her resentment pursued him to the very gate of Hades. Nevertheless, the fabulous prosperity of the De Beers Consolidated Mines, which are, commercially speaking, the glory and salvation of the Cape Colony, is clearly due to the survival of the primitive instinct for personal adornment in "Eve throughout the ages." Just so long as it pleases her to hang glittering stones about her body, will the De Beers' combination remain the strongest power in South Africa, for the number of diamonds that do not ultimately find their

\* The outbreak of war has for the moment interfered with Kimberley's splendid isolation.

way into her possession must be inconsiderable. In the present, at least, there is no sign that the new woman will succeed in eradicating from the collective feminine breast that desire which joins the nineteenth century and every antecedent era. Kimberley need have no thought for the morrow. Her foundations are sure. They are built upon the everlasting rock of human folly.

The town, as it is to-day, is entirely the creation of the De Beers Company, and the greater portion of it is occupied by persons either directly or indirectly in its employ. The diamond mines are naturally the pivot round which the whole community revolves. On the morning after my arrival in Kimberley I paid my first tribute to this stupendous industry. Under the guidance of the courteous secretary, Mr. Pickering, I passed through the barred and bolted corridors which guard that room in the offices of the Company where each day's yield of diamonds is brought by an armed escort, there to await the discriminating eye of the expert valuer. As they lie in little piles, sorted out according to their size and quality, one might take them for fragments of inferior glass. A diamond in the rough is, of all embryonic things,



the most uninteresting. Its own dust is the magic wand that wakes it to life, and lights that unholy fire which begets a kindred radiance in the eyes of nine women out of every ten ever created. But even a diamond in the rough has individuality. Just as the tea-taster can tell what plantation has produced each cup, so a connoisseur in diamonds can attribute each stone to its own place. Its form and colour betray its origin. Those, for instance, that come from the Premier Mine are singularly regular in outline, perfect cubes of faultless white. From the Kimberley and the De Beers mines the yield varies much in colour, some of the stones inclining to a faint creamy hue, for when a diamond is not white it is generally yellow. They showed me diamonds in every shade of sulphur-white down to deep saffron, which are more valuable even than stones of the purest water. There were several piles of imperfect stones, for Nature often seems to spoil her best by a spot or disfiguring flaw. The commonest kind of flaw is a dark ridge stretching right across the stone, as if it had been severed at some period of its growth and welded together again. Diamonds so marked are called "maccles," and are hewn by the *tail-*

*leur* into chips and sparks. In a case of cut diamonds which Mr. Pickering showed me, there were specimen stones of every hue, from glowing golden to pale rose and black, but, with the exception of the first, these "freaks" are more curious than beautiful.

The De Beers' mine being closed to visitors, on account of the alarming frequency of mud-rushes, I prepared to make the descent of the Kimberley mine under the escort of one of the directors. As there is a good deal of water in the underground drives, I had been warned to wear the simplest attire, which was further protected by the addition of a linen coat and high waterproof boots. The shaft being vertical, I was spared a repetition of the sickening sensation which I experienced in the skip of the Robinson mine. One simply sinks into the earth in a primitive kind of lift, which stops 1500 feet below the surface. You step out of the lift into the midst of a bewildering activity. I shall never forget the scene.

Imagine an immense clearing dimly lighted by electricity, converging at the farthest end into the arched mouth of a tunnel. Out of this aperture a stream of miniature trucks, loaded

with diamondiferous earth, rushed continually. As each truck reaches the end of the clearing it is seized by two natives, who tilt it into the gigantic skip which conveys it to the surface. Once empty it is shunted on to a side track, and disappears again into the black jaws of the tunnel. No sooner is this accomplished, apparently in the twinkling of an eye, than its place is taken by another truck, and so on perpetually. The roar of the skip as it dashes skywards with its load, the incessant stream of locomotives as they pour out of the tunnel, the shouts of the half-naked natives, all make up a scene that is like some fantastic gehenna, whose tumult dieth not.

After watching it for a few minutes, we move forward into the darkness of the tunnel, stepping cautiously along the side, to avoid contact with the battalions of loaded and unloaded trucks, which, in the flickering light of the candle which we each carry, seem to take the form of stealthily approaching monsters. A walk of about five minutes brings us to the working, where the trucks are being replenished and dispatched. It is not easy to describe on paper the system by which they are loaded. The entire wall of the tunnel is covered by a series of wooden trap-doors.

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As each one is raised a little, the "blue ground," as the diamond-bearing earth is called, falls into the truck. When it is full, the trap-door is shut down again, until another truck is in position. In this way the weight of the earth is utilised, and an immense amount of labour is saved. From this particular working drives branch out in every direction, narrow timbered passages which will, in their turn, be hollowed out. Retracing our steps, I descended another 300 feet to the level whereon a huge pump has been erected, which supplies this strange underground settlement with air, and at the same time forces the foul air to the surface through a special shaft designed for its escape. And I must say I found no difficulty whatever in breathing anywhere in the Kimberley mine. On the Rand one is nearly suffocated at the 800 feet level, but here, though double the distance from the winds of heaven, the atmosphere was uniformly cool and fresh. The perfect system of ventilation was probably responsible for the fact that I felt no sensation of fatigue when I finally emerged into the cloudless blue of the African day.

All the wonders of the De Beers' mines are

not, however, hidden in the bosom of the earth. So imperious, it would seem, is the feminine desire for diamonds that all the ingenuity of man, and all the resources of mechanical science, have been exerted to wrench them from their solid covering of hard, grey, rock. Acres of ground are covered with leviathan machines, brought by years of thought and observation to a perfect adaptability for the work they are designed to do. Manifold structures of corrugated iron protect them and the army of operatives, white and black, who tend their wants and keep them in incessant motion. The hauling engine alone occupies a vast building, and is a marvellous monument of iron and steel, dominated by a mammoth wheel which revolves as silently and perpetually as the world on its axis. Its function is to draw the skip with its tons of rock from the bowels of the earth, where I had just been. From thence we passed up the perilous-looking steps of a spiral staircase to the pulveriser, a huge cylinder of iron, through which the partially disintegrated rock is pressed, on its way to the battery. There the noise is deafening, so I only lingered long enough to observe the eternal hammer of the

stamps and the restless movement of the pulsator, a series of vibrating trays constantly flooded with water, which clears the precious crystals from the refuse of the battery. Thence they are washed over another machine, fashioned like a stairway, the steps which are anointed with a preparation of grease to which the largest of the fugitive diamonds adhere. Those which may escape this process are secured by the rotary washing machines, huge circular vats, into which the refuse flows. Therein it is stirred by a revolving rake which still further winnows the wheat from the chaff; whereafter the latter assumes the name of "tailings," and undergoes in process of time another treatment, calculated to arrest the flight of the minutest crystal. Not one will my lady spare.

My round of inspection finished, the carriage which awaited me at the gate bore me swiftly away in the direction of Kenilworth, the model village and farm, covering seventeen thousand acres, in which Mr. Rhodes takes so keen an interest and pride. Our way took us past an endless stretch of sad grey fields, surrounded by high walls of barbed wire, topped by huge electric light globes. These are the "floors"

over which the blue ground is spread, as soon as it is taken from the mine. Until it has been thus exposed to the disintegrating action of the heat and air, the flinty hardness of the rock defies even the strongest battery. These floors are laid out in rectangular sections 600 yards long and nearly half as wide, and over each section about 50,000 loads are deposited. After three months' exposure, helped by a harrow which continually ploughs it over, the blue ground taken from the Kimberley mine is ready for the machines. But that extracted from the De Beers' mine, being harder, has to remain at least double the time.

Although Kenilworth calls up no ghosts of that glamour which the romance of history has woven about its name, it demonstrates to what an unexpected degree the will of the cultivator, backed by unlimited capital, can triumph over Nature in her most parsimonious mood. By judicious planting and systematic coddling the De Beers' Company have made the barren wilderness blossom with the shell-like pink of a myriad fruit trees, bordered by thick shrubberies of feathery palms and the milky green of impenetrable cactus hedges. Round and about



this fair oasis are clustered dainty bungalows of red brick, wherein many of the 1881 white *employés* of the company are housed. In one corner of the plantation stands the spacious club house in which they distract their leisure and bless the paternal solicitude of those who control the vast industry into whose hands they have given themselves and theirs for ever.

Less liberty is necessarily permitted to the 5280 black servants of the De Beers. By Act of the Cape Parliament, passed in 1887, the adoption of what is called the compound system was sanctioned. This measure, which was framed to check the wholesale theft of diamonds, provided that the natives who contracted to work in the mines, generally for a period of three months, might be confined within a zealously guarded enclosure, beyond whose walls they were not allowed to stray. My last afternoon in Kimberley was spent in looking over the compound, which is a little town in itself. At the time of my visit the large circular space was crowded with natives belonging to almost every tribe in Africa. Some were plunging in the large swimming-bath which is sunk in the centre of the court ;



others were stirring a pot of mealies over a fire of wood embers ; others, again, were sewing or carving wood. The huts arranged round the walls are partitioned off among the various tribes, who live and eat apart, as is their wont, mingling only in the hours of work and play. In one corner of the compound is the hospital, through which the doctor, a knowledgeable person with a prematurely old expression and a passion for photography, accompanied me. In one of the beds a native sat gasping, in the last agonies of phthisis. As we passed he lifted his great eyes, full of the dumb pathos of a wounded animal, and I paused in involuntary pity. "Yes," remarked the little doctor, "I don't think he will last out the night. We don't often have cases of lung disease. The fine, dry air of Kimberley generally cures any tendency to that in its incipient stages. I have done what I could for him, but his case was hopeless from the first."

"Are they grateful for your care, do you think?" I asked. "Grateful?" he answered, with a laugh, "not a bit. I have been at this work for some years now, and I have never yet seen the slightest trace of gratitude in any one of them."

Near the entrance to the compound is a row of little shops or stores, which supply the natives with everything they can possibly want in the shape of food and clothing. These are, like everything else, under the control of the De Beers' Company, who purchase their stock from the local merchants at cost price. The goods are retailed to the natives at a slight profit, which is devoted to public works for the benefit of the Kimberley citizen. This arrangement was the sop wherewith the company sought to appease the wrath of the local tradesman, who, when the compound first started, saw ruin staring him in the face. That this step was necessary to safeguard the industry is indisputable, for, before its adoption, the traffic in illicit diamond buying had assumed such prodigious proportions that the company calculated its loss at something like a million per annum. But the day on which the compound system was inaugurated the trade of Kimberley, then a flourishing commercial centre, began to wither away. Like all monopolies, the De Beers' Company brought death in its wake, which settled like a blight on all industrial activity apart from its own. Kimberley is

now as much a preserve as a Scotch deer forest. Not that the state of things is abnormal, or particularly regrettable. The gigantic trusts which in America control the production of many necessities of life, are infinitely more mischievous, and stretch their octopus arms over a much wider area. The amalgamation of the diamond mines, which was the reward of Mr. Rhodes's patience and tenacity, has given far more to Kimberley and to the Cape Colony than it has taken away.

For at least one of its good works I was disposed to be devoutly thankful. The Sanatorium, where we lodged at Mr. Rhodes's invitation, was built by the De Beers' Company at a cost of £26,000, and covers an area of nine acres. As described by the guide-book, "it is not a hospital or nursing home, but a first class hotel, intended as a health resort for ladies and gentlemen seeking fine dry air as a means of recovering from incipient maladies of the chest and throat. There are no resident or official medical attendants or nurses, and it is not intended for the reception of advanced disease, but for delicate persons who, with the comforts of an English home added to the climatic

advantages, may, like many others now residing at Kimberley, regain health and strength." To say that it is beyond all question the best hotel in South Africa, is to say too little. It would be a delightful place to stay in, anywhere, with its large rooms, well-trained English servants and excellent cooking. And as the Sanatorium is only required to be self-supporting, having no rent, interest, or capital charges to pay, these comforts can be obtained upon very moderate terms. No guests are received without an introduction from one of the directors, a very necessary formality which should increase rather than retard the success of the institution. With regard to the climate of Kimberley, Mr. Rhodes is himself a demonstration of its salubrity. The town stands 4100 feet above the sea level with a mean temperature varying from  $56^{\circ}$  to  $72^{\circ}$ . When I arrested my flight there, it was in "sweet September," that sad autumnal month with us, which in Africa is spring-time. The air had the quality of a light sparkling wine which makes one laugh for no reason, and even at mid-day the sun had a tender warmth that embraced you like the smile of a friend, and never burnt or exhausted you. And as I drove

back to the Sanatorium, through the brief twilight, all the outlines of the landscape stood out sharp and clear, as in the plenitude of noon-tide. Nature has no shadows in Kimberley, and no mysteries. She says what she means to say, distinctly, without innuendo.

## CHAPTER IX.

## THE GARDEN COLONY.

My first impressions of Natal were not such as to induce that rapturous admiration which every inhabitant of the "Garden Colony" seems to regard as an essential part of his birth-right.

The journey from Kimberley to Pietermaritzburg is a triangular one, necessitating a day's rest in Johannesburg, which enabled me to rally the scattered remnants of my luggage before taking the evening express which reaches Maritzburg in about twenty-six hours. As a line the Natal Government Railway leaves something to be desired. I afterwards met in Durban a robust individual who told me that he always took that journey with the fear of death upon him. Owing to the fortunate accident that a judge of the High Court in Pretoria, departing on a lengthy circuit, was our companion as far as Charlestown, I was

permitted to pass the frontier undisturbed save by the violent oscillations of the train, which plunged on its way like a spurred horse. Nor did morning bring consolation, for the daylight only revealed to me our giddy and circuitous route. It appears that the line was built by a truculent contractor who, being paid by the mile, forebore to curtail his profits by the usual method of tunnelling. In consequence it winds its tortuous path around the shoulder of those precipitous grass hills which fringe the eastern border of the Transvaal. The flimsy construction of the permanent way, and the series of sharp curves that we described in quivering haste, must make the nervous traveller wish fervently he were elsewhere, though the entirely different character of the scenery, so unlike the sandy plains I had left behind, served to distract my thoughts from the anticipation of disaster. Nevertheless I descended from the train with that sigh of relief which springs from the vague consciousness of danger evaded, and as I passed out of the station of Maritzburg into a misty twilight, with a curtain of fine rain obscuring the background of tree-covered hills, I had some

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difficulty in remembering that I was still in Africa.

Evil fortune in various irritating forms attended my sojourn in the capital of the Garden Colony. To begin with, all the people to whom I had letters of introduction were absent. The Governor, Sir Walter Hely Hutchinson, was away on an official tour through Zululand, and the Prime Minister, the late Sir Henry Binns, was languishing on a bed of sickness from which he could only send me a few courteous words of welcome and regret. Added to these disappointments, the hotel, which may have been endurable in midsummer, was converted by the sudden deluge into a box of oozing moisture intersected by long corridors down which all the winds of heaven tore and moaned.

Glimpses of the little town set in its frame of undulating woodland, wonderfully reminiscent of Devonshire, were vouchsafed to me in the brief intervals between the showers. But at the end of three days I decided to brave once more the terrors of the Natal Government Railway, and started for Durban, aching in every bone, and chilled to the heart by the



sudden change of temperature. Poor picturesque Maritzburg! You gave me too tearful a greeting to claim justice from my pen.

There was balm, however, in Durban—Durban with her luxuriance of leafy green bathed in sunlight, and her sky and sea like rain-washed forget-me-nots. It is Devonshire again with more than a suggestion of the tropics. In the palm-fringed gardens oleanders and camellias flame against the false violet of creeping bourgeonvillias, and mingle with the waxen cups and shining leaves of the magnolia trees. The “Garden Colony” deserves its name, so universal in Durban are its lawns of smooth turf and its banks of blossom and foliage. In and out of them winds a broad golden ribbon of a road, leading to the residential quarter called the “Berea,” from which one dominates the close curve of the bay, whose southern side is formed by the long arm of the Bluff stretching a tapering finger seawards.

The town itself rests on the shoulder of the hill, a city of silvery stone houses branching out from a central square. In its midst a garden blooms, overlooked by the post-office, a colossal grey pile, and the dwarfed verandahs of the

Royal Hotel, deemed, in days long past, the best in Africa. I have, however, little to say in its praise. The rooms are badly furnished and swarming with insects, and the food, served by coolies clad in immaculate white and sashed with purple, is indifferent, even for Africa. In this respect, Natal treats her visitors with scant consideration, presuming too much, it may be, on the beauty of her flowers. I was told of one hotel in contemplation and, if well managed, it would assuredly reap a harvest, for Durban is the Brighton of Johannesburg. In the period of greatest heat, flocks of jaded financiers with weary eyes and very brown boots, drop down from the Rand, searching, like Dr. Syntax, for a respite of picturesque peace.

Facing the Royal Hotel, a row of rickshaws, drawn by stalwart Zulus, lie in wait for the indolent. When you move in the direction of the gate, the whole row rushes towards you, and a crowd of bronze statues, in various stages of decorative undress, make frantic and smiling appeals for your patronage. After some hesitation, my choice fell on one whose attire consisted of a loose white shirt and a girdle of skins and beads. On his head he had fastened, Mercury-

wise, two emerald parrot wings, and as soon as I was seated in the tiny carriage he capered gaily away, crooning, as he ran, the refrain of a native song. In the streets a motley crowd hurried and wandered—soberly-dressed Natalians, whose rugged faces betrayed their Scottish ancestry, intent on business; English sailors loafing away their leisure; soft-footed Indians, with transparent, copper-coloured skins and tawny eyes, moving with a deer-like grace; and here and there a Zulu woman, her hair plastered into a cone and her face glistening like carved ebony.

Presently a carriage, drawn by superb horses, darted past us, its owner a rich Banyan merchant in a gold-embroidered coat of white silk, handling the reins with the skill of a British coachman. At every corner one finds fresh evidence of the prosperity of the Indian settler, and one realises that the question of the oriental invasion is fast becoming the problem, not of the future, but of the present. In the days of the colony's infancy, before the tamed Zulu had learned how to turn his spear into a ploughshare, the Indian—silent, sober and intelligent—was more than welcome.

He tilled the ground, he worked the factories, and discharged the duties of domestic service as admirably as he did all the rest. But when every ship from Bombay brought its contingent of hungry Orientals, who devoted their talents to trade as well as to servitude, the brave Natalians began to say "Enough!" To-day the Indian population of Natal—over 53,000 souls—outnumbers the white population. Many of them have amassed large fortunes in trade. Free from the vices of the white man, and easily able to underlive him, the Indian merchant finds no difficulty in underselling him also. As a result, the bulk of the Colony's trade, exclusive of the shipping, is in his hands. Of late years the colonists have taken measures—occasionally violent ones—to check the influx of Orientals, but so far without success. The Indian is a British subject, and takes full advantage of that equality of opportunity which the English flag affords him. It is difficult to see what limitations the colonist can impose upon his activity, and how they are to be enforced. But this is a problem which will eventually have to be faced and solved, in conjunction, probably, with Her Majesty's Imperial Government.

There is a man in Natal, sometime Premier of the Colony, who has stamped his personality upon the place and the people, almost to the exclusion of every other man in it. His name is Harry Escombe, and the privilege of adding "P.C." thereafter was granted to him as a mark of Queen Victoria's Jubilee favour. Something of his fame had reached me in Cape Town, so, armed with a letter of introduction from Sir James Sivewright, I started on the day following my arrival to deliver it. With some difficulty I found his house—two stories of brick half buried in a tangle of tropical vegetation. Mr. Escombe had just returned from a visit to Mr. Rhodes at Groote Schuur. The idea of a possible union between Cape Colony, Natal, and the North, was much in men's minds just then, and this visit was, in many quarters, regarded as a first tentative step in that direction. As a matter of fact, Mr. Rhodes desired, as he himself told me at Vryburg, to sound the depth of Mr. Escombe's antipathy to the then inchoate Customs Union Convention. I am inclined to think that he found it stronger than he had imagined, although Natal had just signified her approval thereof by vote of two-thirds of the Legislative

Assembly. But among those acquiescent the ex-premier was not, nor ever will be.

The adoption of the Customs Union Convention, which the Orange Free State had also joined, by the Natal Parliament, was the work of Mr. Escombe's political enemies. There is little doubt that it was brought forward with the object of conciliating the country party, whose representatives form a majority in the Senate of Maritzburg, just as they do at Cape Town. Indeed, some measure of redistribution is as urgently required in Natal as in Cape Colony. A bill providing for single member constituencies would, at least, obviate such scandalous over-representation as at present exists there, as, for instance, in the constituency of Alexandria, where one hundred and ninety-three electors return two members to protect their interests. It must, however, be remembered that the constitution of the Natal Parliament differs in one essential respect from that of the Cape. In consequence of the immense preponderance of natives over the white population—some five hundred and twenty-eight thousand (exclusive of Indians), to forty-nine thousand—the franchise is not extended to the blacks on

any terms whatever. Each member is, however, supposed to be under a moral obligation to represent informally the views and interests of the coloured people residing in his constituency. And this obligation, which sits very lightly on the majority of members, accounts, in a measure, for the absurd disproportion between representation and population in the country districts. It is natural that a tariff which proposes to protect the farmer at the expense of the consumer should have immediate favour in the eyes of the majority, while a section of the minority seems to have been carried away by the beatific vision of a United South Africa, which the convention is supposed to foreshadow, and to have forgotten their constituents' needs and ideas. But electors will turn, and, as a result of their having bartered cheap food for a dream of federation, no fewer than five members, representing towns, were requested to resign their seats. Thus does Mr. Escombe justify his assertion that Natal is joining the Customs Union against the wish of her people, of whom about two-thirds are consumers.

And besides raising the *ad valorem* duty from 5 per cent. to  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., and from 15

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per cent. to 20 per cent. on the native blanket and other special imports, the Convention increases the excise on all the necessities of life, with the exception of flour, on which a nominal reduction of 6*d.* per 100 lbs. is made, while that on sugar drops from 8*s.* 4*d.* to 5*s.* on the same quantity. How far the Convention goes in the direction of protection will easily be gauged from the following table, in which the previous rates are contrasted with those fixed by the Convention.

<i>Imports</i>	<i>Former duty</i>		<i>Convention duty</i>	
	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>
Ale, per gallon . . . .	0	9	1	6
Candles, per lb. . . .	0	1	0	2
Cheese, per lb. . . .	0	2	0	3
Coffee, per 100 lbs. . . .	4	2	16	8
Jams, Tinned and Preserved Meats, Fish and Fruit, per 100 lbs. .	16	8	18	9
Matches, per gross . . .	1	0	2	0
Spirits, per gal. . . .	9	0	15	0
Claret, per gal. . . .	1	6	6	0
Tobacco (manufactured) . .	2	0	3	6
„ (not manufactured) . .	0	6	2	6
Cigars . . . . .	4	0	6	0

In this list only such imports are included as may fairly claim to be essential to the life of the average citizen. But, in addition to this increase in Excise duties, a new tax of 2*d.* per lb. on



frozen beef, and 1*d.* per lb. on frozen mutton, is also imposed by the Convention. There is, on the whole, abundant reason why the inhabitants of Durban, Maritzburg, and the large towns in the Garden Colony should feel that they have been jockeyed by an ambitious Government into paying a little too dearly for a sentiment which is still very far from being crystallised into a concrete reality. As to the advantages which Natal will reap from the action of her Ministry, they are, to say the least, problematical.

In person, the ex-premier of Natal is a tall, spare man, with a thin greyish beard, on the wrong side, I should say, of fifty. His only remarkable feature is his deep-set eyes, which are curiously brilliant and full of melancholy disdain, the eyes of an impatient pessimist. We spoke together at some length. He reminded me forcibly of Charles Parnell—there was the same preoccupied manner, though nothing of the Irish leader's impassivity. Mr. Escombe seems, however, to inspire in his contemporaries a similarly passionate admiration or dislike, and to have the same capacity for devotion to a fixed idea. The Harbour Bar is to him what Home Rule was to Parnell, a cult as well as a crucifix.

Around that question of the Bar a long and bitter controversy has raged, for Mr. Escombe's belief in Durban Harbour as a future rival to Delagoa Bay is as profound as his disbelief in the benefits of the Customs Union. So far the harbour cannot be regarded as an unmitigated success. It has cost £1,000,000, spent over a period of three years, to deepen the water on the bar from 12 feet to 19 feet, and this achievement is, of course, not permanent. The dredgers are still waging a constant warfare with the sea, and if, as was the case during my stay in Durban, the equinoctial gales are blowing, the "cone" goes up to warn all whom it may concern that the bar is impassable. When the dredgers go to work again they find only about 10 feet of water on the bar, such is the perpetual silt of the sand. Moreover, this problematic 19 feet will have to be deepened to 30 feet before the liners will always be able to cast anchor in Durban Harbour. It is true, as Mr. Escombe constantly points out to the uninitiated, that the vessels coming in pay the cost of dredging; to which the irreverent reply that on the whole the ships might as well go elsewhere and the dredgers

too. In the meantime the extension of the pier, which the ex-premier so energetically denounced in the day of his power, is being proceeded with according to the plans and recommendations of those two eminent engineers, Sir Charles Hartley and Sir J. Wolfe Barry, in the hope that the problem of Durban Harbour may thus be solved. In principle these plans are exactly similar to those advocated by Mr. Methven when he occupied the thankless position of engineer to the Harbour Board, and from which he was most unfairly expelled through Mr. Escombe's animosity.

As my fleet-footed rickshaw-boy flew back with me to the hotel the sun had sunk out of sight behind the verdure of the Berea. The air seemed to pulsate with perfume, and a thousand scents mixed themselves in my brain as I pondered on the potentialities of an alliance between Mr. Rhodes and Mr. Escombe. There are, in fact, in these two men essential sympathies not to be neutralised by very obvious dissimilarities of mind and character. Both have that intolerance of the sordid details of the day, and that long-sighted anticipation of the verdict of futurity. Both, more than any other men in

South Africa, have a touch of genius which lifts them beyond the moiling herd of party politicians, and rivets the eye of their generation. To compare them further is to contrast broadsword with poniard. There is something of trenchant and bitter humour, winged swiftly from brain to voice, that has wrecked Mr. Escombe more than once on a stormy shore. Nature, as well as circumstance, seems to have made him a leader of opposition. From the point of view of intelligence, his is, I should say, the finer—so subtle and so acute ; yet the force which translates intelligence into action is stronger in Mr. Rhodes. Together they ought to be invincible, though for men to work concordantly for any length of time they must be a positive and a negative, that is, in a sense complementary to each other. Neither Mr. Rhodes nor Mr. Escombe is negative in any sense or on any subject. They may certainly combine to carry one particular point, each using the other as a weapon. But in the case of both “all the thoughts they think are thought,” to use the words which Newman once applied to himself. I have therefore not much faith that any treaty in which mutual confidence is an element will ever

be signed and sealed between these two statesmen—each a great man, as Africa counts greatness.

Some days later I spent a few hours looking over the sugar factory at Mount Edgecombe, which turns out 5000 tons of sugar in the year of ten months' crushing. All the hands, numbering over 1000, are Indians, many of whom I saw working in the fields as the train wended its way through acres of sugar canes. They are indentured for five years, earning ten shillings per month during the first year with a rise of 1s. per month as every twelve elapse, but even this rate of pay, small as it seems, prevents the Natal Company from selling sugar as cheaply as the Mauritius product, where the natives receive their wages in rupees.

Besides the sugar plantation, Natal has a prospective industry in tea, though up to the present it has been unable to compete successfully with Ceylon or China. I tasted some tea grown in the Colony, but it has a bitter, herby flavour, which makes it a very poor substitute for Asia's delicious leaf.

The coal industry of the Garden Colony is likewise in a parlous condition. While I was there a commission was sitting with the object of placing

it upon a sounder basis. That it stood in need of sweeping reforms was proved by the fact that its price at the pit's mouth (5s. per ton) was higher than it is in the Transvaal, where the cost of living is far greater than it is in Natal.

On the 24th September I was informed that the Deutsche Ost-Afrika steamer "König," in which I had booked a passage for Naples, lay at anchor in the opalescent waters of the bay ; so I gathered myself up to take leave of Durban. Its charm had rested and healed me. Moreover, knowledge of some of its citizens had shown me the shadow of a strange antagonism between the spirit of the place and the spirit of the people. The humid warmth of its atmosphere, the sensuous luxuriance of its vegetation, has not bred any corresponding grace in the souls of those hardy Scots, who have made Natal a thriving British Colony. They remain as they were in the cold north—stern, reserved, and uncompromisingly Presbyterian. Consequently Durban does not add to the gaiety of nations, for all that it is set "in a garden fair." To the eyes that see, the Indian and the Zulu are much more in the picture than the white inhabitant who so bitterly resents their propinquity.

## CHAPTER X.

## IN PORTUGUESE TERRITORY.

THERE is a tradition, which three years ago was a fact, that Lourenco Marques is one of the unhealthiest places in South Africa. An intention to stay there, especially if expressed in Durban, is invariably met with the accent of warning and commiseration. A few days' residence, however, will dispel the illusion that in studying the Delagoa Bay question on the spot one is taking one's life in one's hand. It is true, of course, that after the rains miasmatic vapour hangs around the low-lying old town; but in the residential quarter, situated on the high cliff, risk of fever is no greater than it is anywhere else on the East Coast. On Ruben Point, as it is called, are the Government House, the Consulates and the Hotel Cardoza, furnished from Tottenham Court Road, while the whole hillside is powdered over with coquettish little bungalows, chiefly occupied by the English

contingent. There is, moreover, something curiously attractive about Lourenco Marques which Durban, with all its beauty, lacks. Perhaps it is the dark, impassive faces of the Portuguese; perhaps it is the wind on the hill, and the dancing sunlight that draws strange arabesques of shadow beside the silver-roofed houses along the foreshore.

At the moment of my landing there, after two days' northward steaming, I was conscious of an accidental excitement among the inhabitants of Lourenco Marques. They would not acknowledge it because of late years it had come periodically, only to fizzle out into disappointment or relief, according to the nationality of the sufferer. This was occasioned by the rumour that the control of the destinies of Delagoa Bay was about to pass into the hands of the English. Among business men there I found a fairly strong impression that this last report was not entirely illusory. It was then believed that the British Government had, in consideration of their providing the supposed large sum (£2,500,000) for the Berne Award, secured a lease of the Harbour and Customs until such time as Portugal should be able to



refund the loan. Some thought that the lease of the railway to Komatipoort would also form part of Great Britain's bargain. On the other hand, I was informed by an influential Englishman, who is constantly in touch with Lisbon, that the railway would remain under Portuguese control. In Pretoria, too, some misgivings had been aroused concerning the part Germany was understood to play in this matter. The supercession of the German Consul, Herr von Herff, whose hostility to the British was notorious, by a gentleman of anglophile tendencies was regarded as a definite proof of the suspected change of policy at Berlin. Nor was this the only change that had taken place in the *personnel* of South African diplomacy. If you asked any one in Delagoa Bay to whom the credit was due for the vast change that two years had effected in the administration of the railway, the customs, and the town, they answered with one accord, "Mousinho." Whether Sir Mousinho d'Albuquerque was recalled to Lisbon on account of his avowed antipathy to everything British, or not, there is no doubt that he was by far the most efficient Governor the Province of Mozambique has ever had. Having

come out to Africa as a lieutenant in the Gazarland Expedition, he was principally instrumental in securing the capture of Gungunhana, the terrible chief whose tribe had devastated the whole surrounding territory. In acknowledgment of his services, d'Albuquerque received a knighthood from the British Government, and was made Governor of the Province of Mozambique. Two years later he was raised to the dignity of Royal Commissioner, and this circumstance has in itself been of an enormous advantage to the country, for it enabled d'Albuquerque not only to initiate reforms, but to carry them out without the delay involved in obtaining permission from Lisbon. His successor, Machado, the brother of his old enemy, only holds the position of Governor General, so that whatever portion of Delagoa Bay remains under the administration of Portugal will, for all practical purposes, be controlled from Lisbon.

Since the day when I sat on the green balcony of Wolff's *café* discussing the situation, these hopes and apprehensions have to a certain extent been realized. The Anglo-German Convention is an accomplished fact, although its

actual provisions are still shrouded in mystery. That England and Germany have agreed to harmonize their African interests generally and their interests in Delagoa Bay particularly is certain. To what extent this understanding will counteract the deleterious effects of Portuguese misrule it is as yet impossible to predict. That it will prevail altogether is improbable : nothing, at least, in the history of the past justifies so large a hope. To any one who knows anything of Portuguese national sentiment on the subject of Delagoa Bay, the idea that the British flag is about to fly over the port is absurd. Wonderful as this natural harbour is, the Portuguese have an exaggerated idea of its possibilities. To them it is the Eldorado that is going to restore the financial credit of Portugal and re-establish her commercial prosperity. The sale of Delagoa Bay to the British Government, or even to a British company, would arouse a torrent of indignation in Portugal that would sweep away more than the Ministry of the day. No one who can recall the scene in Lisbon when the terms of the Convention of 1890, brought back from London by Senhor Barjona de Freitas, were disclosed, will question the truth of this asser-

tion. That document contained a clause which prevented the Portuguese from ceding "her territories South of the Zambesi to any other power without the previous consent of Great Britain." Its ratification by the Cortes was so obviously impossible that the clause was abandoned, and in 1891 another Treaty, giving Great Britain the famous right of pre-emption, was signed. Whatever the new Anglo-German understanding with Portugal concerning Delagoa Bay may be, it is certain that the Portuguese flag will continue to fly in the delicious air that blows landwards over Ruben Point. If, however, Great Britain is thereby empowered to construct docks and wharves, and to supervise the administration of the Customs Department, Delagoa Bay will soon become one of the finest harbours in the world.

The Portuguese have neither the money nor the energy to develop the port themselves, though the scandalous delays in transporting goods from the harbour to the railway are now almost a thing of the past. With all his patriotism, Mousinho had the wit to realise that a strain of alien blood could alone vanquish the invincible indolence of his race. The present Commissioner of Customs, though a Portuguese

subject, had a Scottish father. Senhor Albers, who has re-organized the railway, is half a German, and between them much has been done to educate the officials to cope with the requirements of the traffic. In 1896 one might have seen thousands of tons of merchandise lying exposed to the weather and to the robber all along the foreshore. Huge sections of mining machinery and hundreds of tons of mealies were either buried in the sand or ruined by the sea water. A considerable portion of the goods imported through Delagoa Bay never reached their destination, and those that did were rendered valueless by damage and delay. As a result the importers were driven to the longer and costlier routes from Cape Town and Durban. But the united efforts of d'Albuquerque, and the new managers of the customs and the railway have succeeded in enormously improving the position of Delagoa Bay as a competitor for the carrying trade to the Rand. Three years ago it had dwindled down to a little over 2000 tons per month, whereas during the first five months of 1898 the monthly average was over 12,000 tons. There are still, however, defects in the transport system that will have to be

remedied. Formerly the landing agents were permitted not only to discharge the cargoes, but also to load the railway trucks, subject, of course, to the supervision of the customs officers. But some time ago the Government instructed the railway department that it must itself undertake the loading of goods on the rail. These new duties have proved somewhat beyond the organising powers of the inexperienced railway staff, and the result has been to greatly retard the delivery of goods in Johannesburg. But the energy of Senhor Albers will no doubt prove equal to this last difficulty.

In spite of these shortcomings, the Delagoa route possesses great advantage over the others, especially in point of price. Compared with Durban, there is a saving of 15s. per ton on the railage, besides a lower customs duty. From Lourenco Marques the rough goods rate is 4s. 2d. per 100 lb., while from Durban it is 4s. 11d. The intermediate rate is, however, 5s. as against 5s. 9d. Then again, the customs duty at Durban is 5 per cent. in addition to the 5 per cent. *ad valorem*, which under the new Convention will be  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. At Delagoa Bay the duty is only 3 per cent. Therefore, such things

as care and despatch being equal, Delagoa must, in the nature of things, attract the bulk of the traffic. As a harbour there is, of course, no comparison between it and the Natal port. Here is the great basin constructed by Nature, only awaiting scientific development to become unrivalled as a refuge for any fleet. Its bar is but an insignificant obstruction composed of mud, which, once removed, could never form again, as there is no silt with the tide. With the control of the harbour and the port British enterprise would have free scope, and that is all Delagoa Bay lacks. Commercially speaking, at least, it is the key to the Transvaal.

As if to compensate me for my untimely arrival in Natal my *daemon* deposited me at Lourenco Marques at the psychological moment when President Steyn was passing through the town after his visit to Oom Paul at Pretoria. In the President of the Orange Free State one sees the Boer at his very best ; both physically and mentally. An almost patriarchal dignity of bearing, at the same time simple and gracious, distinguishes this man of herculean build, in whom education has expanded natural gifts distinctly above the average. But his superiority



to Paul Kruger does not only lie in his six years' study in Holland and in England. From every point of view these two men are the antithesis of each other, and the great gulf between them is in a measure typical of the difference between the Boers of the Free State and of the Transvaal. Soon after dinner, at the Hotel Cardoza, President Steyn retired, but his State Secretary, Mr. Fischer, spent the whole evening with the friends who accorded me the hospitality of their lovely villa. My hostess—a Swedish nightingale—sat down at the piano as we passed out into the amethyst gloom of the verandah. It was one of those magical still nights on which the innumerable vibrations of sound seem to take visible form and substance. Her divine voice rang out and every palm leaf echoed it, trembling with joy. As we sat watching the nervously conscious attitudes of the flowers, Mr. Fischer reproached me for not having broken my journey at Bloemfontein.

The Free State Boers are an intelligent, peace-loving people, whose pastoral habits do not prevent their appreciation of the benefits of civilisation. The large Uitlander population domiciled for the most part in Bloemfontein,



and following commercial avocations, may not contain the turbulent elements of the Johannesburg community. To the credit of the Free State Boer it should, however, be said that no kind of misunderstanding has ever arisen between him and the stranger within his gates. And further, if we examine the page of history, the Free State Boer has much less to thank the British for, than his fellows who crossed the Vaal river. We forced on him in 1854 an independence which he did not want and could not maintain. Despite the fact that we had solemnly pledged ourselves to supply him with arms and ammunition in the event of his being attacked by the native hordes that fringed his territory, we summarily stopped the supply at the very moment when, spent by a long and harassing war, the Free State burghers were gathering themselves together to complete their victory over the Basutos. Instead of coming to the assistance of the Orange Free State, we annexed Basutoland on the eve of its conquest.

The early history of the Kimberley diamond mine, too long to detail in these pages, is not a memory likely to fortify a wavering belief in the

invincible integrity of the British in their dealings with the Free State. In spite of the past, however, there is not in the Free State to-day a trace of that race hatred which is so rife in the Transvaal and the Cape Colony. The fact that President Steyn has at his right hand a man of conspicuous intelligence and breadth of view counts, no doubt, for much. Mr. Fischer, who still holds the position of State Secretary, was offered, on the resignation of Dr. Leyds, the same appointment in the Transvaal. That he refused it is a misfortune, not only for the Transvaal, but for the peace of South Africa. Mr. Reitz, who accepted it, has all Mr. Fischer's sincerity of purpose without either his energy or his judgment. When the friction between Pretoria and Johannesburg first reached an acute stage, Mr. Fischer alone of all President Kruger's councillors urged him to grant the franchise to aliens on the same terms as the rights of burghership are extended to them in the Free State—that is, after a residence of three years. Quite recently again he has filled the office of mediator, using his perfect, persuasive English and his unfailing tact in the cause of amity—explaining, exhorting,

pacifying, that the irreconcilable might be reconciled.

The night was old when he rose to leave us ; only the mosquitoes, beside ourselves, kept vigil. " Tell the English," he said as he bade me farewell, " as much of the truth as you can. The journalists who come out here are generally like men with one eye, seeking only those facts which confirms their foregone conclusions. But the British public seems to believe their fantastic tales, and thus the seeds of strife are sown. Tell your people, any way, that we shall never be the aggressors against them. We know that we have nothing to gain and everything to lose by a war with England. As for our Uitlander vote, it has never caused us a moment's anxiety." And I promised him that as far as in me lay I would tell them the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, after which he went out alone into the radiant night, and I saw him no more.\*

By noon of the next morning we were under way for Beira with a perceptible increase of pas-

\* Since these words were written the attitude of the Orange Free State immediately before the outbreak of hostilities seems to belie them. They represent accurately, however, my conversation with Mr. Fischer and my impressions of his people and of himself.

sengers, among whom were Mr. George Pauling and Mr. A. L. Lawley, well known as the contractors for the Cape and Rhodesian Railways. Thirty-six hours gliding through a waveless sea brought us to anchor in "the wee sma' hours ayont the twal" within the sandy bay of Beira. As Messrs. Pauling and Lawley had kindly arranged a picnic party for us up the Beira Railway it was still very early when we stepped into the Captain's gig and were rowed to the shore by six lithe and brown Zanzibaree boys, dressed in white tunics bordered with blue. A special train, drawn by an engine that resembled a giant coffee pot, was awaiting us on the little toy line, and we were soon rattling away towards Fontesvilla at an unusual rate of about eighteen miles an hour. The level country through which we sped, verdant but not exotic, is pastoral in character and recalls the midland counties of England. Fontesvilla itself is miserably unworthy of its grandiloquent name. As Mr. Lawley explained to me, it was looking its worst that day, for half its tin houses had been moved up the line by the engineers and operatives who owned them. What remained of Fontesvilla looked indescribably wretched and mean. On the return journey

our little locomotive put its best wheel forward again and we alighted in Beira covered with the glory of a broken record.

The story of Beira is the history of a struggle, still actively proceeding, between man's energy and the forces of the devouring sea. The waves of the Indian Ocean, which only a few years ago swept over the narrow tongue of sand on which the town of Beira now stands, make constant efforts to reclaim their own, in spite of the means already taken to protect the new settlement against the encroaching tides. The reason which has stimulated human ingenuity in this fight with the elements is the future importance of this port on the East coast of Africa, second only to Delagoa Bay as a harbour and a highway into the interior. I have already dwelt at some length on the importance and the progress of the Beira railway. On the substitution of the wide for the narrow gauge and the gradual opening up of Mashonaland, a large influx both of capital and population may be expected in Beira. It is in view of this imminent extension of the activity of the port that such superhuman efforts to expand the boundaries of the town are being made under the auspices of the Mozam-

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bique Company. The Companhia de Mocambique, to give its correct title, was inaugurated by a Portuguese Royal Charter in 1893. Sovereign rights, as well as commercial privileges, over a large tract of country extending from the Portuguese territory of Inhambane in the South to the Zambesi in the North, were thereby conceded to it. In order to pacify national sentiment the nominal political control of the Company's affairs is held by the Lisbon Board. Fortunately for the destinies of Beira, however, the financial and commercial administration is entirely vested in the London and Paris Committees. To their enterprise the town of Beira owes its existence. Its fate is still precarious, of course, and must remain so until the termination of the works now in progress ensures to it permanent protection against the sea.

Beira is separated from the mainland by the narrow river Chiveve, which exhausts itself in a sandy estuary near its junction with the Pungwe River. For the purpose of draining and reclaiming this triangular piece of swamp a quay wall is now in process of construction by the French Sud-Est Africain Company, which is

executing this work on behalf of the Mozambique Company. As building sites in that part of the town now fetch £4 10s. per square metre, the expediency of this project is obvious. Moreover, when the proposed sea-wall is continued in an unbroken curve to the Point de Gea, which stretches seawards from the northern extremity of the town, the available area for building purposes will be about three times its present dimensions. The actual sea-wall, constructed by the Mozambique Company at a cost of about £60,000, has suffered somewhat from the occasional high tides that threaten the safety of several buildings situated on the foreshore, which is imperfectly protected. But, as the new wall will necessitate the expenditure of over a million sterling, it is probable that the sea will continue to ebb and flow over the area susceptible of reclamation until the prospects of the port justify such an outlay. In the meantime, a series of breakwaters are being constructed on the old wall that will thrust the force of the tide more into the channel. During 1898 an appreciation of the great possibilities of the harbour inspired various projects for increasing its utility. The channel, which even



at low water has a depth of 32 feet, was well buoyed, and a pilotage service for the port was organised. Since September 15, 1898, pilotage has been compulsory for all vessels entering or leaving Beira Harbour. A cutter is afloat and four certificated pilots are ready for service. By this measure the constant grounding in the narrow channel will be obviated, and sailing vessels, sure of safe conduct, will be more ready to accept freights for Beira. When the improved scheme for deepening the Chiveve River, now finally sanctioned, is carried out, what is now a mere creek will at once be enlarged into a deep basin, admitting vessels up to 26 feet draught. With the erection of wharves up the new channel, and the suggested pier, the port of Beira may yet become the finest in Africa.

The internal development of the Mozambique Company's territory is as yet only in its infancy. When the broad gauge reaches Macequece, that portion of the auriferous Manica district which lies within its boundaries will be consistently opened up. Preliminary investigations tend to support the belief that rich gold reefs intersect the whole province, but the value of the gold-



bearing country lying along the watershed of the Zambesi will probably remain problematical until the projected railway to Tete is constructed. This line, which will pass through Senna to Beira, will also tap extensive coal-fields, from which there is already an output. The extreme fertility of this region should render it a rival to the Busi River district, where agricultural industries are already established and prospering.

Despite the energy of the London and Paris directors one cannot but deplore the fact that the political administration of Beira is in the hands of Portuguese officials, who numbered two hundred and twenty-seven out of the five hundred and forty-three Portuguese subjects resident there at the end of 1898. Despite their numbers, however, the incapacity either to formulate a decisive policy, or to carry it out, characterises them here as elsewhere. The present Governor of the Mozambique Company, Colonel Gorjoa, is a well-disposed person, far inferior, however, both in vigour and intelligence to either of his predecessors, Colonel Machado and Meyrelles de Canto. During his absence from Beira in the month of August, 1898, serious rioting in the streets endangered both the

life and property of its inhabitants. The perpetration of several burglaries by three Englishmen sufficed to inflame the animosity which is always smouldering between the Portuguese police and the foreign residents. Relieved from the restraint of the Governor's presence, detachments of police paraded the streets breathing forth fire and insult. Colonel Gorjoa's speedy return restored immediate order, and stringent measures have at last been taken to prevent a recurrence of the outbreak. The possibility of such a disturbance is, however, significant of the supine character of the Portuguese authorities and of the difficulties that attend the London Board's effort to promote good government in the dominion within its jurisdiction. The revenue of the Company for 1898—£140,000—is practically the same as the £136,000 collected in 1897, but the imports show an increase of £34,000 over the 1897 figures, while there is a corresponding rise of £6000 in the value of the exports. With regard to the import trade of the Mozambique Company's territory, Great Britain sends goods to the value of £631,155, which is equal to 69 per cent. of the total £911,163. She also

controls 80 per cent. of the goods which pass through Beira on their way to Mashonaland.

As I have said before, the future of Beira as a port is largely bound up with the ultimate destiny of Rhodesia. The town itself will gradually grow larger as the hungry sea is forced to disgorge the land it has swallowed up. At present its crying need is for some system of electric trams which will deliver wayfarers in the streets from the slough of sand through which they have to pass. The temporary toy rails over which prominent citizens run their private cars, pushed by natives at the rate of about two miles an hour, form an irritating mode of locomotion even for the few who avail themselves of it. Artistically speaking, Beira has no beauty to boast of. In the main street the few substantial houses break up a long sequence of dwarfed tin bungalows. These are for the most part drinking saloons, deserted by day, but radiant by night with that orange glare which to the sailor seems to typify the joy of living denied him by the service of the sea.

On my return from the picnic, I bethought me of a letter from a high official in Lisbon urging me not to leave Beira without making

the acquaintance of Colonel Gorjoa, to whom my visit had already been announced. So, after ploughing through the sand for about an hour in one of the aforesaid little cars, I knocked at the door of Government House, a brand-new red brick house engarlanded with flowers over which the Portuguese flag floated indolently. The Governor and his suite had, however, gone to the celebration of some national anniversary and I was thus obliged to return to the ship without seeing him. Just before we cast anchor that night the splash of oars indicated the approach of a visitor from the land, and I heard a voice calling my name in excellent English. This proved to be Colonel Gorjoa's secretary with a bouquet of orchids and an explanation of the Governor's absence that afternoon : an entertaining youth, with nothing of Portuguese lassitude about him, who seemed to bear his exile with a light-hearted *insouciance*.

At Mozambique one seems to pass the frontier of another world. Though beyond the jurisdiction of the Mozambique Company it is still part of the Portuguese Dominions. The utilitarian spirit has not touched this enchanted

island, which is sacred alike to the traditions of the past and to the enervating Eastern air. Here one finds that union of luxuriant colour and austere line which Lessing held to be the elements of the perfect. The rows of low houses, with thick stone walls, a monument of slave labour, are as straight and square as sections on a chess board. Painted rose and saffron, and here and there a warm silver, they remind one of multi-coloured caramels. At the vanishing point of the island is Vasco de Gama's Fort, grey, not with paint, but with years, a perpetual protest against Portuguese degeneracy. Through the battlements peep obsolete guns and the roseate blossoms of the oleanders—a garden within a grave. On the way thither one passes the long green-shuttered house where Major Mousinho d'Albuquerque recently lived and reigned. One can imagine how the place must have palled on that martial spirit, for Mozambique is a paradise of inaction, the mirage of a dream.

Returning on our steps, we called at the German Consulate, where we were regaled with the milk of fresh cocoanuts—a delicious drink—and permitted to rest in a huge cool room whose

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walls, solid as those of a prison, intercepted the ardour of the sun. Through the slim windows I watched the pageant of the noon-day flaming upon a town asleep. In the streets no one stirred, save one Suahili woman with a yard of indigo gauze twisted around her body and a circular comb of tortoise-shell on her head. There was no business or barter, no carriages or horses anywhere, not even a rickshaw for hire. People lived, I suppose, in those caramel-tinted houses, but I, at least, never saw them. After sipping our cocoa-milk we returned to the ship, there to await the sunset, being carried out to the gig on the shoulders of the native rowers, for it was then low tide. Turning a deaf ear to the voice of conscience which urged me to prepare my homeward mail, I lay idly on the deck with my eyes turned towards Mozambique. I wanted to be alone with it, to saturate my soul in its beauty, to learn the secret of that mysterious life of the tropics, half-sensuous, and half-sublime. At last I was face to face with it and I felt somehow like a child who had come home for the holidays. The memory of Beira wakened me from my trance. Was it possible that it could be lying there scarcely two days

steam to the South? The width of the world might have divided Mozambique, where a hundred years are but as one day, from Beira, so obviously, so vulgarly of to-morrow. Only in Africa can such things be.

Upon these weird reflections Captain Doherr's cheery tones broke in, reminding me that we were bidden to dinner with the representative of the Fatherland, and that it was time to start for the shore. The sun had turned his back upon the hemisphere, and as yet the moon had not cast aside her veil. It was so dark that we jarred repeatedly against the barges loaded with great logs of ebony, waiting to be transferred at dawn into the hold of the "König," in our efforts to find the landing-stage. The dinner, I must acknowledge, rewarded our search; we were served by Suahilis in long flowing robes of white, who make excellent servants, noiseless and sagacious.

Meanwhile, the mellow gold of the moon triumphed over the night, and as we glided once more over sea on our way home to the ship, Mozambique rose behind us, the ghost of its noontide self. On just such an evening four centuries ago, Vasco de Gama may have stood

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on the battlements of his fort, pondering vain-gloriously on the maritime power of Portugal. And that other intrepid one, Mousinho d'Albuquerque, what dreams were his on Mozambique's ineffable white nights? Both are gone to-day, and Mozambique is still as ever the same. But Portugal sinks deeper into the mire of her slothful ineptitude with every year that dies.



## CHAPTER XI.

## UNDER TRICOLOR AND EAGLE.

I OWE my acquaintance with Madagascar to an accident, for the boats of the Deutsche Ost-Afrika line only touch at the island once a month to bring away a cargo of ebony, vanilla and rafia (a kind of hemp), which form its chief exports. My waking eyes met the iridescent wave shadows of the Indian Ocean as we undulated gently eastward over the vast glittering field of water. The world was set in a universal key of blue save for the twin streaks of pearly foam that marked out our moving path, till at noon on the second day the first officer, pointing to a film of diaphanous grey that arose between us and the horizon, turned to me and said, "That is Madagascar."

A few hours later we were lying off Majunga at the mouth of the river, which is the only highway to the capital, Antananarivo, from the western coast of the island. Majunga has no

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loveliness that one should desire it. Its irregular lime-washed houses, most of them built by Indian traders of the past, lean together like paralytics glued to the barren shore. Behind them the hill rises, covered with a parched-brown undergrowth, and here and there the monstrous grey skeleton of a baobab tree. At the summit stands the house of General Gallieni, the military Governor of Madagascar, then absent in the capital, trying to impress the recalcitrant Malagasy with phrases that were "fickle and fine and French."

On the sandy beach a score of sternwheel transport boats, which were sent out with the expedition, lay rotting. Everywhere there was an air of thirsty, nerveless, decay. One recalled with a smile the bombastic prophecies of the Paris press at the time of the occupation ; for the development of Madagascar, which was to open up an Eldorado for the French colonist, is not yet within measurable distance of reality. Not the slightest attempt had as yet been made to test or to strengthen the resources of the Island. On the contrary, the policy of taking all you can get out of the native without giving him anything in return had been pursued with as

much consistency as the constant friction between the civil and military authorities in Madagascar would permit. Excessive taxation has been imposed all round. Each native man and unmarried woman is now subject to a hut tax of four dollars a head (a dollar being five francs), while married women without children have to pay \$1½. It is on the Indian merchant, however, that the burden falls heaviest, his licence costing anything between eighty and two hundred dollars per annum. As a result of this, the Banyan, who has nothing of the European aversion to fresh woods and pastures new, is drifting away from the French sphere of influence. The trade of Majunga is not a third of what it was four years ago, and under the present system of administration, there is no reason to hope that it will recover. In the meantime skirmishing was still going on in the interior. Though disbanded, the Hovas were by no means either disarmed or subdued. The day we landed at Majunga nearly two hundred French soldiers were brought down the river. They had been two months without provisions. Fever had reduced them to an indescribable condition. Those I saw were unable to walk and had only

a few rags wrapped round their emaciated bodies. It was a sickening spectacle.

There is only one Englishman at Majunga—Her Britannic Majesty's consul, with whom I had an interesting conversation on board. He has made three hunting expeditions across the island, which he described as extremely beautiful in parts, and wonderfully rich in all kinds of minerals. The climate is practically the same as that of the mainland, neither better nor worse. Madagascar has undoubtedly possibilities, but under the present French colonial policy its commercial future is very problematical. At least one condition under which France acquired the island has been entirely disregarded. Instead of lending cordial co-operation towards the suppression of the slave trade in East Africa, French officials have, by objecting to permit vessels flying the Tricolor to be searched for slaves, given the traffic tacit, if not active, encouragement. In order that they may escape molestation from the British and German police, numbers of Arab slave-dealers have placed themselves under the protection of the French flag, which practically enables them to prosecute their trade with impunity.

The recent publication of the consular report has demonstrated that the encouragement of the slave traffic is not the only violation of the agreement which handed Madagascar over to Gallic misgovernment. In 1890 M. Waddington, the French Ambassador in London, anxious to secure our recognition of the new French protectorate, signed an engagement which declared that "the establishment of this protectorate will not affect any rights or immunities enjoyed by British subjects in that island." The privileges referred to in that document were, as Lord Salisbury subsequently pointed out to the British Minister in Paris, "The fiscal rights granted to British trade by the Treaty of 1865 with the Queen of Madagascar, under which the most favoured nation treatment was secured to British commerce, and it was stipulated that the duty upon imports should never exceed an *ad valorem* duty of ten per cent." On that understanding alone England abstained from issuing a Declaration of Neutrality, and permitted the Tricolor to be hoisted over Antananarivo. In spite, however, of that agreement and a solemn assurance to the same effect by M. Bertholet in the Chambre des Députés, a tariff imposing pro-

hibitive duties on all foreign goods, including those of British manufacture, was promulgated almost as soon as the French expedition had set foot in Madagascar. Grey shirtings, for instance, a most important class of cotton imports, are taxed to an *ad valorem* equivalent of from 54 to 79 per cent. But in answer to repeated protests made by our Government through Sir Edward Monson, we have received nothing but M. Delcassé's promise to investigate the question. Meanwhile, statistics bear eloquent evidence of the fatal result of these differential duties. During the first six months of 1897 our exports to Madagascar were worth £108,722. In 1898 they had dwindled to £17,454 for a similar period, and in the first half of the year 1899 the sum had been reduced to £16,915. Had this pernicious system of protection been anticipated, the difficulties which naturally attached to the French undertaking "would," in the words of Lord Salisbury, "have been increased to a formidable degree."

The German trade with the island has also suffered considerably since the advent of the conquering Gaul. Through the firm of William Oswald & Co., established in Madagascar for

over thirty years, large quantities of native products were exported. But the French customs regulations, which had just been put into force at the time of my visit, rendered the outlook for the import trade most ominous. On account, moreover, of the jealousy with which foreign trade was regarded by the French, vessels belonging to the Deutsche Ost-Afrika Company had been forbidden to call at more than two ports during the voyage. This extreme form of protection is in fact the corner-stone of the French system of colonisation, and Madagascar simply furnishes another instance of its fatality. So far, the American trader seems to have withstood it better than we have done. For when the new duties on the grey shirtings imported from the States sent the price up from \$93 to \$118 per bale of 1000 yards, the Yankee merchants only increased their competition with the Frenchman and have succeeded in bringing down the price to \$83.

That night we cast anchor for Nossi Bé, hugging the coast until we reached it about three o'clock on the following afternoon. Nossi Bé is one of those exquisite islands which serrate the shores of the Indian Ocean. It lies under



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the north-western shoulder of Madagascar, poised like a jewel upon the bosom of the dissolving flood. Two men-of-war drowsing in the bay, and the Tricolor flickering over the hastily constructed jetty, were the first visible signs of the Gallic invasion. Thereafter one observes a series of gabled bungalows disputing the cliff side with the dense verdure of the mango trees which sentinel the climbing road leading from shore to town. At the end of the ascent the trees widen into a grassy square surrounding the white-washed church, another chill reminiscence of the West. In one corner of the square, great branches, heavy with crimson leaves, make ruddy shadows on a frail fence formed of dry palm stalks. Overhead a giant acacia leans like a branching emerald, and through the long cool fronds of the banana palms exotic blossoms peep, nameless and indescribable. At the farthest extremity of the square is a little *café*, ironically called "Glacière," where we commune over a prospective dinner. The patron, a diminutive person with whiskers, whose expression suggests a chronic sense of the indignity of exile, assures us that the resources of the island will be taxed to the uttermost.



In the interval we wander up the straggling village. Nearest to us is the Indian quarter with its characteristic stores, each flanked by a palm garden. In the verandahs fat Banyan merchants recline smoking, while their children dart in and out, like gorgeous butterflies in loose trousers of brilliant silk, surmounted by a short gold-embroidered jacket. None is darker than a pale olive, and some, fragile and great-eyed, have just a butterfly's beauty. No women are to be seen anywhere, until a little further on our way we pass a group completely enveloped in copper-coloured yashmaks, which melts silently away into the gardens on our approach. At the branching of the road, we turn aside into the native quarter, a series of lanes cut out of the woods. The huts, built of bamboo poles and thatched over with grass, are close set along the forest edge, and I reflected that the desire for human proximity is as characteristic of the untutored intelligence in the East, where space is unlimited, as it is in the over-crowded West. To realise all that there is of grace and beauty in the Hova women one must watch them as they come, just before sunset, to the well. One by one from the

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farthest end of the village, the quest of water draws them like a magnet to this place. Swaying figures of blue and rose colour, pitcher on head, glide up to the bubbling stream and move away again with that sinuous grace which is their inheritance. In feature the Hova woman differs enormously from the women of other native races of Africa. Her type is Asiatic rather than Negroid, due, doubtless, to former inter-marriages with the old Malay settlers, who, in some parts of Madagascar, were antecedent to the Hovas themselves.

While my companions from the ship strolled on in quest of adventure, I sat down by the fountain, as if chained to the spot by the action of a narcotic. A woman passed close to me, holding a pitcher. Her indigo robe, patterned over with red dragons, "more expressed than hid" the superb lines of her body, and on her sienna-coloured skin one could discern a soft grape-like bloom. From her head dark hair stood out like an infernal nimbus, and I thought of Baudelaire's *Vierge du mal*, of the black Madonna in the cathedral at Chartres, and of other *macabre* and incongruous things. As she awaited her turn at the fountain, her

eyes met mine with the unfathomable gaze of a fascinated animal. If I could, I would have asked her so many questions, but further than the East is from the West was the chasm that yawned between us; not only a shade of skin, not only a babel of tongues, but the sword that separates the Great Unconscious from those who have eaten of the poisonous fruit of the Tree of Knowledge. For the curse has come upon us of the West, with those things which it has entered into the heart of woman—white and wayward—to understand. And, as she glided away into the hot dusk, I asked myself if it were because we had never learned the divine secret of her step that our conception of beauty is always born in a moment of arrested action. Pose is really only one manifestation of the perfect, whereas beauty in motion is infinite and inexhaustible loveliness. As I rose to rejoin my friends, a man came out of a hut and snatched a basket of fruit from one of the girls with rough words, and rougher gesture. Dear God! how it hurts to be a woman everywhere!

Turning back again we find ourselves once more at the Café Glacière. The patron is better than his word, and we dispute with the

mosquitoes a *poulet à la Marengo* that would do credit to the Savoy itself. As we dined, a couple of French officers tripped in to drink cognac and play dominoes. I had some conversation with one who confessed that he was dreaming of Paris. The beauty of Nossi Bé, that seemed to acquire a new enchantment from the night, had ceased to console him. But as I bent my steps back to the quay, along the avenue of mangoes, the darkness seemed to vibrate with a myriad murmuring insects, and one could almost taste the poignant perfume of the flowers. Nature has made this island incomparably lovelier than anything in Europe. It unites the charm of the South with the magic of the East.

Sleep eluded me that night, and as I turned restlessly in my cabin bed the clanking of heavy chains, and the straining of timbers, told me that the "König" had resumed her course, steaming away into equatorial summer.

I rose on the morrow in response to a message from Captain Doherr requesting me to come up to the boat deck as quickly as possible. This was my first intimation of our proximity to Dar-es-Salaam, for a glance in

the direction of the coast revealed nothing but the ubiquitous green lowlands. From the higher altitude I could, however, perceive a thin silvery stream coiling serpent-wise through a grove of palms. Though deep enough to take vessels of thirty feet draught the channel is only about one hundred yards wide, and thus the entrance to the harbour taxes the skill of the navigator. The capital of German East Africa is built on the fringe of a wide basin, which could easily be rendered inaccessible from the sea. It has that air of tremulous activity which connotes the seat of government, and of that commerce which streams towards it from the Hinterland, ivory and india rubber from Mahenge being the principal items. In the town itself is a rope factory, the fibre for which is obtained from the *agare* tree that flourishes even in the sand. Here also is the largest hospital in Africa, a huge grey building, distinctly visible at the mouth of the channel. But beyond these monuments of industry and philanthropy—attributes somewhat rare, it is true, in this continent—nothing of absorbing external interest exists in Dar-es-Salaam.

We went on shore at eventide to buy walking-sticks of ebony and ivory from the native hawkers, returning speedily, however, for the dance on board, to which every officer and official, from the Governor downwards, was invited. Tall palms and gay flags transformed the deck into an excellent ball-room, and the admirable supper which followed our reckless gyrations on the light, fantastic toe, proved the skill of the "König's" *chef* to be at least equal to his patriotism. At dawn, the Governor, suddenly called to Berlin by a death in his family, was to come on board, and I was warned that a salute of seventeen guns was the penalty for this distinguished addition to our company.

There are two persons domiciled in Dar-es-Salaam whose names are likely to rise out of the great forgotten. These are Said Khalid, sometime Sultan of Zanzibar, too ill with fever to receive me during the space of my brief visit, and General Edward Liebert, Governor of German East Africa, whom I met on board ship. This fortunate circumstance enabled me not only to make the acquaintance of a remarkable personality, but to learn some details concerning

the present and future of German East Africa, of which I should probably otherwise have remained ignorant. General Liebert had served his country with distinction long before he was appointed—less than three years ago—to succeed Wissman in Africa. At the termination of the war of 1870, he remained the only survivor out of four brothers, all of whom had borne arms in that campaign. His nomination as Governor of German East Africa took place coincidently with his elevation to the rank of general. The second of these dignities carried with it a unique honour, for it made him the only Imperial general in the empire. His peers derive their titles from the state to which their corps belongs, but General Liebert, being appointed to administrate an Imperial colony, became *ipso facto* an Imperial officer. Entering his presence, one becomes immediately aware of the martial spirit, not blatant, indeed, but concentrated into some six feet of gravely ceremonious manhood. The chill of this calm courtesy is, however, merely apparent. It is broken by flashes of quite genial humour, and by the evidence of some grasp of the essential elements of things.

General Liebert is as much statesman as



soldier. One realises the sagacity that tempers the impetuous "blood and iron." While at Berlin, he intended to require several things of the Supreme Powers. The first was the encouragement of private commercial enterprise in German East Africa, and the second, a grant to complete the cost of the railway. For long the neighbouring Uganda Railway has been a thorn in his side. It has, perhaps helped him to realise the weakness and nullity of his country's colonial policy, if she can be said to possess any definite colonial policy at all. True, it is only nine years since the Imperial Eagle replaced the administration of the German East Africa Company. It now flies, however, over an area which is about twice the size of Germany in Europe, extending from the Portuguese territory to the southern boundary of the British sphere of influence, and stretching away westwards as far as the Lake District and the Congo Free State. But beyond the narrow margin of the coast no effort has been made to develop the resources of this immense area.

When the Reichstag votes 4,000,000 marks to supplement the yearly revenue of 2,000,000 marks, it absolves itself of all responsibility, save



the pleasant duty of criticism. At present, the principles which animate the Colonial Office in Berlin are those of a small grocer in the suburbs. It will probably remain so until some accident diverts the rapacious intelligence of William II. towards the theory and practice of colonial expansion. In that day it will be fortunate for greater Germany if the Emperor sees fit to take General Liebert into his counsels. Were he made, like Mousinho d'Albuquerque, a royal commissioner, German East Africa would grow more in one year than she has grown in nine. Though constantly hampered by official ignorance at home, General Liebert has accomplished something during his brief administration. The remittance of half the hut tax of three rupees, collected in each district for local improvements therein, is a departure in policy made during the year 1898, which has worked admirably. But the private commercial enterprise which, with its energy and capital, has made British colonies what they are, is non-existent here. Every third German you meet in East Africa is an official, bent on drinking as much beer and doing as little work as possible, until such time as he is invalided home with

what is by courtesy called sunstroke. The whole colony is, in fact, eaten up with petty officials, three-fourths of whom are useless, if not mischievous.

Tanga, the other port in German East Africa, at which we lingered only long enough to embark a consignment of coffee for European consumption, bears about the same relation to Dar-es-Salaam as the Hague does to Rotterdam, although the distance between the two former places is much greater. On this occasion the entire population naturally turned out to receive the Governor, who kindly asked me to accompany him on his tour of inspection.

Tanga rises sheer out of the sea, her cliffs overgrown with verdure. Above their crowns of almonds one can distinguish the massive white walls of the "Boma," as the old fort is called. Adjacent to it is one of the finest houses in Africa, the residence of the District Governor, the Baron von St. Paul Illaire, which has all the elegance and solidity of the environs of Berlin. From its balconies one dominates the bay, glistening a hundred feet below like a slumbering turquoise, and the island, midmost between the extremities of its

curve, where after sunset they take the dead. To the right stretches a long garden, laid out with the care and leisure which give to German East Africa that air of permanence and peace so curiously absent from the British colonies. By way of its gravelled path one reaches the town, with its wide market square and its native quarter, where all the houses are houses, not huts, and the streets are planted with acacias, like a Prussian boulevard.

In the school, containing about fifty Suahili boys, the scholars were put through their paces for our edification. Their copy-books would put many an Eton boy to shame; their ardent attention left nothing to be desired. In this remote corner of Africa, reclaimed from barbarism only eight years ago, the most wonderful system of education in the world—the German system—has already forged its way. One cannot, however, praise with equal warmth the railway to the interior, the station of which lies a little beyond the school-house. It has a three-foot gauge and excellent carriages, but though it looks imposing, the traveller thereon needs all his patience and courage. One whom I subsequently met assured me that on the occasion of

his journey the passengers had to get out of the train about half-way from their destination, and help to repair the line.

Thirty miles of railway are now open, but the construction is of the flimsiest. The line descends gradually all the way to the coast, so that there is nothing to arrest the wash brought down by the rains, which often sweep away the rails in the wet season. The Government is already alive to the necessity of taking it over from the private company in whose hands it now is. The question of price alone remains unsettled, and, as the work is now in abeyance for lack of funds, it is to be hoped that this difficulty is not insuperable. It is proposed to carry the railway as far as the highlands of the Kilima Njaro. At present it is actually of some assistance to the coffee-planter of the Usambara district, who is beginning to see the fruit of his labours. A cargo of 3500 bags of coffee was exported in 1897, which was expected in 1898 to reach a total of 10,000 bags. Beyond the Usambara district there should be a future for the German emigrant farmer, already settled there in small numbers. These uplands are fertile beyond belief, and perfectly healthy.

The cause of scientific investigation and the prestige of Germany in Africa are equally indebted to Dr. Hans Meyer, who accompanied General Liebert on his homeward voyage after his fourth ascent to the summit of the Kilima Njaro. His first ascent in 1887 was interrupted by the Arabs, who took him prisoner, and, though in the second and third attempts he discovered the existence of the old crater, it is in this last ascent that he alone among the living has been able to plant his foot on the summit of Kilima Njaro's 19,600 feet. From the plain the entire ascent was accomplished on foot and, starting this time from the southern side, it occupied six days, two days of which were spent in cutting a path through the primeval forest which encircles the mountain. One other white man and sixty native bearers, who left long before the snow line was reached, accompanied Dr. Meyer in the earlier stages of his perilous expedition. During the three weeks spent above the height of 13,000 feet, he was able to obtain convincing proofs of the existence of old glaciers or moraines, probably much larger in extent than the present glacial area. The remains of these old glaciers go down on the south side of the mountain to

15,600 feet, and to 15,000 feet on the western slope. This is about 3300 feet lower than the present ice formation, which is divided into six long tongues on the south and three on the west. These walls of ice are estimated by Dr. Meyer to be 350 feet thick at the summit, and as much as 150 feet thick at their vanishing point. In character they differ entirely from European glaciers, melting off into deep ridges of solid ice, owing to the superior heat of the sun. It is, however, his observations concerning the ancient glacial period that constitute Dr. Meyer's greatest contribution to natural history. He is inclined to think that Kilima Njaro contains evidence more convincing than that of the Andes in its support of the theory of a universal telluric period. "*Mais où sont les neiges d'antan?*"

Regarding the fauna of the mountain, Dr. Meyer saw elephants at 12,000 feet, and on the plateau between the two highest peaks, a level of about 13,000 feet, eland and antelope appear to thrive. On the summit of Kilima Njaro, the temperature fell to fifteen degrees centigrade, and Dr. Meyer was compelled to lie down to breathe every ten minutes. In spite, however,

of the difficulties of the ascent, he does not appear to have suffered in any way. But for his spectacles and the slight stoop which gave an air of Teutonic studiousness to his tall, blond person, one would have taken him for an English guardsman on the return journey from Cashmere, with a bag of big game and a camera.

## CHAPTER XII.

## BRITISH EAST AFRICA.

ALL roads in Eastern Africa, even the celestial way of the wind, lead to Zanzibar, that clove-scented island for whose sake we sacrificed a bleak rock in the North Sea some nine years ago. Two British men-of-war and a motley crowd of coasting steamers, trading schooners, and Arab *dhow*s, share with us the ample anchorage of the bay. The town, which borders the straight sweep of the shore, makes a braver show than any on this coast. Its jagged line of white houses is longer and they face the sea, as if they believed in the importance of Zanzibar in the scheme of international economy. The faded rose and gold of the Tharia-Topan building, now masquerading as a hospital, reflects warm amber shadows on the pallid neighbouring walls, and keeps alive the story of an age-long law-suit.

Another reminiscence of the past, bitter, if



salutary, to the native of Zanzibar, is revived by the ruins of the old Palace of the Sultans, whose wounded sides gape into the foreground of the picture, like a corpse which the grave has never hidden. Close to it the new Palace lifts its four naked walls, solid but ignoble, while at the farthest corner of the bay, last in the line of sight, stands the British Agency, with its emerald persiennes and encircling balconies. And over all broods the terrible splendour of equatorial noon.

When the garish day was waning, I went forth to seek the dwelling of General Sir Lloyd Mathews, which is invisible from the sea. After much questioning, through the mouth of a shipmate who spoke Ki-Suahili, the universal language, with fluency, I discovered it, and was shown into the presence of the Prime Minister, who is in several respects a remarkable person. Not only is he adviser *en titre* to the Sultan, acting as intermediary between him and the Imperial Government, but also Commander-in-Chief of the Zanzibaree forces. A diplomatist as well as a soldier, he is all-powerful in both capacities. In manner he is as much of an Arab as Emin Pasha was, serene,

courteous, inscrutable, while his large, white person suggested somehow the Grand Vizier in "The Arabian Nights." His house, a museum of art treasures, emphasizes the impression. The joyous daylight streams through windows of pink glass on jewelled weapons and oriental silver, many of them marks of royal favour. Tea, whose pungent aroma filled the whole room, was served, and at the close of our conversation I was informed that one of the Sultan's carriages was at my disposal. Later on I saw General Sir Lloyd Mathews again, driving with the Sultan, who was escorted by a detachment of cavalry, gorgeous in trappings of scarlet and gold. These oriental soldiers ride always as if spurred on by a battle cry—a flash of colour through the hot evening air, and they have gone. This was the only opportunity I had of observing His Highness's dark, heavy face, negroid in type and colour, with but slight traces of the royal Arab blood.

The history of the Sultans of Zanzibar is a long romance. Of Said Said's four sons none inherited his ability but the second, Bargash by name, and father of the boy Khalid, whom the British rejected at the point of the sword. But

the usurper whom they put in his place has never been accepted by the native races of the mainland. If you ask a Somali where Said is, he will answer that Said is at Dar-es-Salaam, inalienably faithful to *le roi en exile*. The present wearer of the purple gives no trouble, however, neither to Sir Lloyd Mathews nor to the paternal Government at home. His acquiescence in whatever seemeth to us good for him, is the sole justification of the bombardment, for which all Englishmen who know anything about it are still inclined to blush.

The exclusively British element in Zanzibar contains more than one interesting figure. It centres, naturally, around the British Agency, where I was bidden to lunch on the following morning, and the personality of Sir Arthur Hardinge. To paraphrase a catchword in a recent popular play, one might remark at first sight of the British Agent: "I know that man: he comes from Balliol." The characteristic laugh and the restlessly-vivacious manner are a hall-mark borne by many men greatly distinguished to-day in modern politics. Of these Balliol-trained and Balliol-branded—including such names as George Curzon, Henry Asquith,

and Edward Grey—Arthur Hardinge is not the least. A marvellous gift of tongues, an untiring energy, and a singularly lucid mind, render him peculiarly fitted for the post he has now held with honour for some years. He gave me much information and an excellent *pilaf*. Like all the representatives of British rule here, he is haunted by dread, remote, if possible, that Zanzibar may once more be gathered within the sphere of German influence.

He reminded me that the island is now no burden to England. It pays its way. Furthermore, its retrocession would render the strip along the coast, which we rent from the Sultan at a cost of about £15,000 a year, practically valueless. This Protectorate has been divided into districts, each controlled by a resident Commissioner under Sir Arthur Hardinge. No hut tax had been imposed anywhere as yet, partly owing to Sir Arthur's fear of driving the native away from the coast, and partly owing to the great difficulty of collecting it. A small tax was soon to be levied along the watershed of the Tana River, the inhabitants of which have constantly to be protected against the raiding Somalis. By means of boats on the river the

difficulty of collecting would be easily overcome. As regards the efficacy of the hut tax as a means of inducing the natives to work, Sir Arthur is sceptical. The necessity of assisting the Arab, who is the only cultivator, and who has suffered immeasurably through the abolition of slavery, is, he thinks, imperative. But the way to do so is not so apparent, with the hysterical fanatics of Exeter Hall scenting compulsory labour at every turn.

The impossibility of getting the native to work, now that he is no longer forced to do so, is fast turning the flourishing clove plantations into jungles. In the adjoining island of Pemba, which is entirely covered with clove trees, the grass grows six feet high in fourteen days. Unless this is kept down, the strength of the trees is sapped, and the harvest ruined. Pemba is so unhealthy that even the natives are affected by the climate and, in consequence, the wages there are sixty *pesas* a day, as against eight to ten *pesas* in Zanzibar. In former times it was the great seat of the slave trade. Even now Arab *dhow*s, flying the Tricolor, and carrying suspicious cargo, may sometimes be seen at nightfall, drifting silently through the trans-

lucent sea in the direction of Pemba. Every one knows what the *dhow*s contain, but the British authorities are powerless, though some day, perhaps, the French encouragement of slavery may be the cause of another Fashoda. In the meantime the problem of native labour in Zanzibar is causing grave anxiety both to the Arab cultivator and the British administrator. Some aspects of the slavery question are not without humour. The following incident is so characteristic of the native habit of thought that it is worth recording.

A boy in the service of the British Consul at Dar-es-Salaam was the legally-held slave of a native servant in the employment of one of the judges of the High Court in Zanzibar. On the judge's servant objecting to his slave leaving for Europe with the consul, the official suggested to the boy that he should apply for his freedom. This, when granted, would not only deprive the judge's servant of his control, but of half the boy's wages. The child refused to ask for emancipation, however, saying that if the consul ceased to pay his master, the judge would have to make it up and, as he would be angry at having to increase his servant's wage, he would

surely send him to prison as soon as he could find an excuse to do so. This extraordinary argument reflects the tortuous flight of native intelligence. As a matter of fact, only a small percentage of slaves make an effort to gain their freedom. The idea so assiduously propagated in this country that all slaves are cruelly treated is utterly fallacious. Many of them are well cared for, and quite contented. It is a significant fact that most of the British in Zanzibar regard the abolition of slavery as a mixed blessing, both for the island and the individual. One person, whose acquaintance I would not have missed, expressed himself somewhat forcibly on the subject. But he was an Arab and an interested party and, therefore, his evidence, though interesting, is inadmissible.

In the company of the former official of the old German East Africa Company, to whom every crevice of Zanzibar was familiar, I went to pay my respects to Tippoo Tib. He led me through a labyrinth of tortuous streets, so narrow that we could scarcely walk abreast, and teeming with every description of merchandise. In the doorways fat Indian merchants sat, several of whom rose to greet my companion, who was



evidently well known to them. Passing through the bazaar, we came upon streets fractionally wider, where the tall houses were closed to the public eye behind great doors of oak, elaborately carved and chased, one of which belonged to that notorious Arab *chevalier d'industrie* whom we sought. The soul of courtesy, like all his race, Tippoo Tib met us at the door, a spare, sinuous figure, alert and upright, with no sign of age about it, save the greyness of the beard. He preceded us to an upper room through that fantastic medley of magnificence and squalor which describes every dwelling in the East. As we climbed the crumbling stone stairs I heard the soft rustle of feminine garments fluttering away into obscurity, and through doors ajar I caught the gleam of bright eyes and the clink of bangles. Coffee and great glasses of pink sherbet were handed as we talked, my friend interpreting the liquid phrases of the Ki-Suahili tongue, a sort of bastard Arabic, with a rippling cadence, very delightful to hear. Tippoo Tib has all the suave cunning of his race. When I asked him if he preferred British protection to German, he answered that since his master Said has turned British he had



followed the example. In reference to the trade in ivory, fifteen to twenty years would, he said, entirely exhaust the supply of soft ivory in Africa. The best now comes from the unconquerable Massai country, which lies between Lake Rudolf and Albert Nyanza; but the immense quantity of ivory brought from the Congo Free State to the coast is all hard ivory, and, consequently, much inferior in value. With regard to the cloves Tippoo Tib was still more pessimistic. He had, he said, abandoned his own plantations, it being impossible to obtain labour to cultivate them. Next year he hoped to visit England with the avowed object of marrying an English lady, though his harem in Zanzibar already contains about four score ladies—wives and others. I explained that we were a monogamous people, but he seemed unable to assimilate the idea. As Tippoo Tib is rich, fabulously rich, by report, and not uncomely, he may even succeed in indulging this fancy, possibly, though not probably, the last.

An hour later we went hence, and were met at the gate by a messenger from Said Serhan, one of the Sultan's relatives, exhorting us not

to pass his door without entering. There followed more coffee and sherbet, whereafter I was presented to the sister of our host, a beautiful little creature, whose delicate limbs were sheathed in silken white. Over her jacket of red velvet she wore a mantle of cloth of gold, and over her face was a mask of golden filigree—the merest apology for a mask—which concealed nothing save the tip of her tiny nose. I asked her, through the medium of a servant who spoke a smattering of French, if she would like to be an Englishwoman, whereat she shook her little head vigorously, and all her bangles tinkled a decided negative. With great pride she showed me a strip of crochet-work that she had accomplished, smiling with pleasure at my praise, and offering me a box of Parisian bon-bons. On such things the Arab woman spends her life—a brilliant tropical bird who sees the sun only through the windows of her cage, for those of high caste never walk abroad, save occasionally at nightfall, closely veiled, and guarded by a retinue of slaves.

It was growing dusk before we could extricate ourselves from the charming insistence of Arab hospitality, and I was due at dinner with

the Judges of the High Court—the best dinner, by the way, which I ate in Africa. Judge Cracknell, who unites the wit of an Irishman with a knowledge of the culinary art that would put a Frenchman to shame, had provided a characteristic Arab dish for my delectation. It was a kind of mince, highly flavoured with all the spices of Araby, and served with eggs, each dyed a different and alarming colour. Midnight was long past when we set forth to wander once more through the network of shadowy streets that led to the quay, winding and crossing like the tangles of a treatise on metaphysics. By day they palpitate with the vivid and indolent life of the East, for Zanzibar is as oriental in character as India. At night there reigns a silence that one can never mistake for peace. The penetrating perfume of the cloves is in itself almost an activity.

There is, after all, something pathetic in the reflection that Zanzibar is little more than a counter in the diplomatic deal. At the last Christmas banquet Sir Arthur Hardinge expressed his conviction that Great Britain would never give up the island. To-day or to-morrow no retrocession is possible, or imminent. But

when the railway to Tanganyika reaches the utmost limit of British Nyassaland, some terms will have to be made with Germany, before the rails stretch Cairo-wards across the Hinterland of German East Africa. That western edge of their territory offers no attractions to the German colonist. Though densely populated by natives, it is practically unexplored, and totally undeveloped. Even the ivory goes northward to British Bagamoya, because on the new caravan road to Dar-es-Salaam no food can be procured for at least fourteen days from the coast. Doubtless Germany would gladly exchange this Hinterland for Zanzibar ; and if such a bargain has not already been proposed by her, I know that an attempt was made at Berlin to make it a consideration in the recently signed Anglo-German Convention. When I discussed the question with the Governor of German East Africa, he remarked : " I can hardly hope that the British will give us back Zanzibar." But, if the day should come when General Liebert's hopes are realised, Germany will certainly get the best of the bargain. When the £3,000,000 were voted for the construction of the Uganda Railway, it was confidently expected that the

Zanzibar trade would drift naturally to Mombassa. Now about two hundred and thirty miles are open, and very little of the trade has been displaced thereby. When another one hundred miles have brought the highlands of the Kikuyu within the reach of the British settler, Mombassa will, in all probability, derive the benefit of the development of a considerable trade with the interior. At the present moment, however, Mombassa has not even a lighthouse, though the entrance to the Pemba Channel is so dangerous that ships belonging to the Deutsche Ost-Afrika and the other lines never attempt to navigate these waters after sunset. As a result many of them go straight on from Tanga to Aden. Several wrecks already bear witness to the necessity for a lighthouse on this part of the coast, and, until the approach to Mombassa is made easier, it is not likely to strengthen its commercial position with any degree of rapidity.

In spite, however, of the gloomiest prognostications, the clove harvest of 1898 turned out a fair average—1,302,700 lbs. in excess of the previous year—although it compares unfavourably with the yields of 1894 and of 1895. The returns for the year 1899 are not yet acces-

sible, but there is no doubt that the scarcity of labour has not prevented a phenomenally plentiful crop. If the freed slaves could by any means be induced to settle on the *shambas* of their former masters, and to work them for a fixed wage in money or kind, the value of the crop would be greatly increased by careful cultivation and discriminating picking. Cloves were, at one time, the only economic product which Zanzibar contributed to the markets of the world; but now the export of copra piece-goods, gum copal, and rubber, brought her total export trade in 1898 to the considerable sum of £1,497,883, which shows an advance of £308,215 on the statistics for 1897. Formerly the bulk of these goods found their way to Great Britain, but she has now been supplanted by British India, which took cloves to the value of £74,810 last year, America having also entered the lists as a large purchaser of this commodity. The import trade of Zanzibar is also in a flourishing condition, the returns for 1898 showing a total value of £1,555,070, making that year the best on record, better than 1897 by £155,992. An examination of these figures is not, it is true, a gratifying task for the British manufacturer.

It is the old story of the steady encroachment of her German rival, as witness the Consular Report for 1898 : " The trade of Great Britain has fallen during these twelve months from £159,894 to £121,211 ; and although the greater portion of this decrease is accounted for by the smaller quantities of coal that have been shipped from the Welsh collieries, yet, if that commodity be left altogether out of the question, there still remains a balance of £4345 on the wrong side. Great Britain, it is true, still heads the list of European countries in regard to the value of the imports ; but deducting the coal, of which she has a monopoly, her trade would be worth £5106 less than that of Germany. And it is not suddenly, or owing to any fortuitous combination of circumstances, that the latter country is passing to the head of affairs in matters of commerce ; her progress has been gradual and well-defined."

Passing from this depressing fact to a consideration of the causes to which it may be attributed, Mr. Cave, whom I met during my stay in Zanzibar, cites three reasons as being mainly responsible. The first is the credit system introduced by the German firms estab-

lished in the island, whereby the Indian retailer obtains a year's grace instead of a month before the day of reckoning. "In the second place," he goes on to say, "Zanzibar is essentially a cheap market, and its demands are met by German far more readily than by British manufactures. The latter may be, and possibly are, of better quality and substance, but the former are cheaper and more attractive to the eye, advantages which, to the native mind, are irresistible; and thirdly, the German manufacturer apparently takes greater pains to adapt himself to the popular taste; he watches the market more attentively, he ascertains more carefully what its requirements are, he sends out a large number of patterns and illustrated catalogues, his designs are fresher and of greater variety, and as a natural consequence he is more successful."

How many consular reports from our colonies tell the same ominous tale, without apparently producing the slightest effect upon the dogged conservatism of our manufacturers? The problem which, sooner or later, we shall have to face is not to be solved by dissertations on the immorality of cheapness. — In the near future,



moreover, we shall have not only Germany to reckon with in the African markets, but America as well. I quote Mr. Cave again: "Great Britain has done fairly well in white shirtings, grey and coloured cloths, both printed and woven, but in the important branch of 'Americani,' an unbleached cloth which is in great demand in the interior of Africa and forms in some parts of the country the only currency, Manchester has not yet succeeded in competing successfully with the United States. The imports of 'Americani' have been larger than usual, in spite of the fact that prices have risen nearly twenty per cent."

This last remark entirely coincides with my observations on the increasing trade of America with Madagascar in spite of the almost prohibitive system of taxation inaugurated by the French. It remains to be seen what effect the new duty of five per cent. *ad valorem* on all imports with the exception of coins, coal, ivory, rubber and tortoiseshell, which the government of Zanzibar imposed on September 15th of the year 1899, will have upon the trade of the island.

Six days and nights of leisurely steaming

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over a glittering summer sea, with never a glimpse of land, is apt to test the strength of the travellers' affection for the ocean. Before I embarked on those three weeks' which began at Southampton and ended at Cape Town, during which I sounded the lowest depths of unmitigated *ennui*, I had fancied myself devoted to "that mother and lover of men, the Sea." And even with the superb conditions of comfort that prevailed on board the "König" I rejoiced when we turned the extreme eastern corner of the great continent and wheeled slowly westwards, under the lee of the Arabian desert, towards Aden. For what I love in the sea is the coast; mid-ocean simply bores me. When the horizon is only a faint shadow joining sky and sea, I am oppressed with the relentless monotony of the vast expanse of water, changeless and ever-present. Thus, Aden, with its arid crumbling hills of sand, wrung from me a welcome mingled with regret for the riotous verdure of the tropics, left behind. As soon as we were at rest in the busy gulf, the ship was surrounded by a surging throng of little boats, filled up with piles of feathers, baskets of Indian silver and silks, and all that jumble of oriental *bric-à-brac*

which one can buy so much cheaper in Regent Street.

To escape the importunity of the hawkers we made speedily for the shore. Again the single file of whitewashed houses looking seawards, more squalid, perhaps, than before, and the brown-limbed loafers, Somalis, for the most part, frail of build, with the faces of early Italian saints. One who had the clear-cut profile of a youthful monk offered to drive us to the Tanks, the only show that Aden has to tempt the insatiable tourist. It is too early to dine, so we accept his suggestion and, after a little haggling, drive away in the direction of the stark rocks, whose splintered points pierce the deepening blue heavens. Others are also on the road. We pass a caravan lumbering down to the port, the staggering camels alternately cheered and cursed by a gaunt and white-robed figure, whose hawk-like eyes glitter at us malevolently. Two ringlets of black hair fall over each ear. "Jehude!" ejaculated our beautiful driver, over his shoulder, by way of explanation, adding the significant syllables, "No good." These are, in fact, Arabian Jews, who bring their merchandise over leagues of

desert to the port, and who seem to suffer a popularity as precarious as do their fellows to-day in Christian France. Our Somali was evidently an incipient anti-Semite.

We have reached by this time the narrow cleft between the frowning rocks, through which we pass, tearing down the steep hill into the valley beyond, where the old town lies—a cluster of white, flat-roofed houses, redolent with the smell and squalor of the East. Half-way up the bleak red hill on the farther side of the village are the Tanks, gigantic reservoirs of solid masonry, whose origin is lost in the mists of antiquity, though they are supposed by some historians to be as old as the Pyramids. The Tanks were obviously designed to garner the rainfall through the long thirsty months when the windows of heaven are ruthlessly shut. These reservoirs descend in a series of terraces, so that no drops of the precious water should escape. There is room for millions of gallons, and it is not within the memory of man that the Tanks were ever full. Beneath our eyes they gaped quite empty, for October is the period of drought, though the presence of a condensing engine in Aden has allayed all local

curiosity concerning their condition. To-day they have sunk to the base uses of the wondering tourists, like the Pyramids, where the mind that devised them is perchance asleep.

Returning to our carriage we sped back to the port through the gathering dusk, escorted by a band of youthful mendicants, who, for pertinacity, leave the famous Neapolitan beggars far behind. For some distance we turned a deaf ear to the whimpering child voices claiming us as father and mother and entreating a trifling alms, till, weary as the biblical judge of their importunity, we compounded, with the driver's assistance, for peace at the price of half a rupee.

Dinner at the Hôtel de l'Europe, a dilapidated building, consisting of several storeys of verandahs, was the order of the evening. It was accompanied by prolonged health-drinking in the very worst champagne it has ever been my sorrow to taste, for several of our ship-mates were remaining at Aden, to await the next P. & O. steamer bound for Bombay. As a result of these pleasantries, those of us who had to return to the "König" that night retained no very clear recollection of how we got there. Personally, I found myself several hours later

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sitting on my deck chair, dejectedly clasping to my breast a long boa of ostrich feathers, a fan of imitation tortoiseshell, and a stuffed devil-fish.

Who was it, I wonder, who first gave to the Red Sea its name of blood and wine, so curiously inappropriate to its radiant sapphire stream, which washes the golden sand of the Sinaian desert from everlasting to everlasting? There is surely no water in the world so fervently blue as that which ripples over all that remains of Pharaoh's legendary hosts. To-day great ships pass continually over its bosom to the utmost corners of the earth, linking Occident with Orient in the scheme of modern civilisation. On board the "König" the thermometer rose to 37° Celsius in the shade, and most of the passengers lay gasping on their deck chairs, increasing their discomfort by copious libations of iced fluids, and vain efforts to select Mount Sinai's peak from among the long range of sand mountains that outline the Arabian shore. The fourth day brought us to Suez and the mouth of the Canal. That triumph of mechanical engineering did not impress me as it ought to have done, perhaps because it effectually aroused

me from the lotus-dream of the tropics, that *maya* in which actuality has no meaning, and time no place. The Canal, with its stupendous accomplishment, is a type of all that is hideous and utilitarian in modern life. I was going back to the things that hurt me, to the prison of the Here and Now.

The heat grew with a wind coming to us over the desert, bringing stagnant odours from black patches of decaying refuse that stained the red sand here and there. It was night when we took temporary root at Port Said, that sink of the world, where the flotsam and jetsam of all nations congregate to feed on the vicious impulse of the hurrying tourist. This, at least, is the reputation which the uplifted eyebrow and bated breath of travellers have given Port Said, and I therefore feel that England expects me to write of it with an *obbligato* of pied and painted adjectives; but, although I searched diligently from ten at night till two in the morning, I found no trace whatever of the fascinating sin which is supposed to be its speciality. In the main street of dirty and dismal shops, the merchants appeared to have nothing more alluring for sale than ragged feather boas and innocuous photographs.



We adjourned to a *café*, at one end of which music hall vales were being played by a ladies' orchestra, the members of which looked as if they would have been more at home in Brixton. While we toyed with some uninteresting coffee, I watched a stout gentleman, who suggested the one word "Kensington," making frantic efforts to intoxicate himself with a *narghileh*. Beyond his contortions when partial success crowned his endeavours, all things seemed to be done decently and in order. Disgusted with the middle-class atmosphere of the whole place, I returned to the ship in a crazy *caïque*, which, getting entangled in the painter of a Messageries Maritimes boat, supplied for a moment all the excitement which I had missed on shore.

But Port Said was the last sod of African soil I would touch for many a day, and so I looked back at it regretfully, almost tenderly, from the coal-begrimed deck of the "König." In truth, I was loth to say good-bye, and, as I leaned over the black water, the whole pageant of my wanderings unrolled itself before my mental vision. I bicycled once more over the Victoria Road; I heard the clash of mining machinery; I breathed the free, upper air of the



brown veldt. There were Durban's tranquil gardens, the caramel-tinted houses of Mozambique, and the Hova Madonna gliding towards me from the fountain at Nossi Bé. There was all that magic of the tropics "*qui rendra fou*," as the wind from over the mountain maddened Victor Hugo. And I turned abruptly from the chief steward, who handed me a *crème de menthe glacée*, and, shutting myself up in my cabin, wished that I were NOT.

To-day, as I write, after a lapse of months, the pageant passes again. On the inner film of consciousness memory paints once more—Africa. I shut my eyes upon my nest of damp English moss, and the colour flames again, and the outline grows again—nothing blurred, and nothing forgotten. "*A qui donc appartient notre reconnaissance? A ce qu'il y a de plus digne, à ce qu'il y a de plus vrai? Non. A ce qu'il y a de plus grand? Quelquefois. A ce qu'il y a de plus beau? Toujours.*"

## CHAPTER XIII.

## SOME OBSERVATIONS AND REFLECTIONS.

BEFORE I lay down my pen, I should like to add to these fugitive impressions of my wanderings in Africa a few words on three problems intimately connected with its present welfare and pregnant with future possibilities. Of these, the greatest and certainly the most far-reaching is the Native Question, which involves the relations subsisting between the white and the black races who conjointly occupy that continent, not only to-day, but as long as both shall endure there.

In considering these relations a distinction must primarily be made between those natives who still remain under the tribal authority of their chiefs and who are principally located beyond the sphere of white influence, and those who live in direct contact with the white population, subject to the white man's laws.

With regard to the former class, the condition of the native has not materially altered since the beginning. He abides in the outer darkness of barbarism, just as he did before the militant Boer and Briton drove him north of the Zambesi or confined him within specially reserved areas. It is true that in the case of those tribes—such as the Matabele and the Mashona in Rhodesia and the Bamangwato in Bechuanaland—who continue to inhabit the borders of the territory wrested from them, we have imposed certain restrictions for our own protection. But now, as heretofore, the wild native is subject to his chief, who rules over the tribe and administers its affairs according to native law and custom, in his own way. Our interference has been limited to the prohibition of certain barbarous practices, notably murder by the “smelling out” of witch doctors, and the tendering of friendly advice to the chiefs through resident officials and native commissioners.

Although bands of natives from these adjacent tribes stream continually in the direction of Kimberley and the Rand, their contact with the white population is merely temporary. As soon as they have earned enough money

to pay the *lobola* or price of a wife, they return to the darkness from whence they came, after a few months' work. As the mines in Rhodesia are opened up and add their demand for labour to the constant cry of the Rand, it is probable that more natives will leave their tribal life beyond the Zambesi for a brief period of underground activity. But not until the projected Cape to Cairo railway has penetrated into equatorial regions, bringing a considerable influx of white residents into the northern provinces of Rhodesia, shall we witness the establishment of regular intercourse between the natives of these districts and the white settlers, such as is now prevalent in the Cape Colony, Natal, and the Dutch Republics.

In these portions of South Africa civilisation has first subdued the native, and then transformed him by slow degrees from a warlike savage into a beast of burden. I use this latter term, not as implying a condition of slavery, for that British rule abolishes wherever it goes, but to demonstrate the fact that all manual labour is now performed by the black population. The Kaffirs till the land, they work the mines, they become domestic servants and store

assistants, labouring always under the supervision of their white masters—labouring willingly, and with obvious benefit to themselves, for the demand being always greater than the supply, a high rate of wage is the rule. In the case of these natives living under British or Dutch law, the tribal customs and habits of the Bantu race have, to a great extent, disappeared with the abolition of tribal cohesion and authority. The colonial coloured man generally wears European clothes, and frequently speaks the same language as his master. But, as Professor Bryce, who has treated this subject more exhaustively than any other writer, in his admirable book on South Africa, points out, the contact between the white colonist and the native who lives close to him and serves him is purely external. The two races dwell side by side, yet absolutely apart. There is no mingling of blood, no social or intellectual intercourse, no fusion of any kind whatever. The attitude of the white population in the mass is undisguised contempt, not untinged with hostility, towards his black neighbour, who repays it with submission and more or less complete indifference.

Nevertheless, although the bulk of the coloured people occupy a position of dependence, the influences of civilisation have not been wholly lost upon them. A small minority has taken advantage of the limited educational opportunities vouchsafed to them in the Cape Colony. Among these educated Kaffirs there are men who have developed remarkable intelligence and an aptitude for commerce and farming on a limited scale. The privilege of the electoral franchise, granted irrespective of race or colour to the Cape Colony in 1853, gave to the few natives who possessed the qualification, a voice in the government; an innovation bitterly resented by the Dutch, none of whom have ever recognised the humanity of the Kaffir or the obligations of the white man towards him. When, however, the necessary qualification for voting was raised in 1892, partly with the intention of restricting the number of coloured constituents, the political influence of the Kaffir was weakened, and rightly so. America affords us an example of the dangers incidental to the wholesale enfranchisement of natives who are totally unfit to make an intelligent use of the power thus granted to them,

and, as the Act of 1892 was equally applicable to white as to black voters, its promulgation involved no injustice. Needless to say, Kaffirs have no political status in either of the Dutch Republics, where the laws affecting them are much more stringent than in the British Colonies. No native is permitted to own land either in the Transvaal or in the Free State, or to travel without a pass, on penalty of imprisonment. The Boers have, in fact, treated the native races with a severity born, no doubt, of their long and sometimes ineffectual efforts to subdue them. In one respect, however, the Free State, and quite recently the Transvaal, have evinced a consideration for the welfare of the Kaffirs which the Cape Colony would do well to emulate. The sale of intoxicating liquors to natives is forbidden in both Republics, although the Pretoria Government has shown no assiduity in the suppression of an illicit traffic. The Afrikaner party at the Cape has hitherto successfully opposed, in the interests of the wine industry, the repeated attempts made by Mr. Rose-Innes to pass an analogous measure, with the result that the poisonous spirit called "Dop," an inferior kind of brandy manufactured

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there, is still working moral and physical havoc among the blacks.

In spite, however, of this and other adverse circumstances, there is no doubt that the coloured people in South Africa are advancing slowly, but surely, over the age-long road of national progress. Now that the tribal wars have ceased to devastate their ranks, their numbers are increasing with a rapidity unknown among white nations. It has been roughly estimated that there are now between six and eight millions of natives south of the Zambesi, leavened with a white population of under 750,000. So far as the history of the contact of white and black races in other continents can enlighten us, there is no reason to believe that the present ratio of ten to one, which is the proportion in which they stand each to the other in South Africa, will be sensibly diminished. Climatic conditions, fostered by peace and prosperity in their new environment, seem to ensure perpetual numerical preponderance to the native. That the majority should ever rise from their present menial position to one in which they could rival the white man appears impossible. But it is not at all improbable that in the course of many



generations, perhaps even of several centuries, a large proportion of natives should fit themselves to compete successfully against the colonist in all branches of commerce and of mechanics. When the Kaffir assumes situations of responsibility where he exercises control and supervision, not only over his fellows, but possibly over uneducated whites, how will the relations between these races be affected thereby? By that time it is safe to presume that all feuds between English and Afrikanders will have died away. Will the race-hatred of the future turn on a question of skin? With regard to that far-off period it is, of course, vain to predict, difficult indeed to conjecture, but those who have looked upon Africa with the will to penetrate her uttermost potentiality and her ultimate destiny, cannot but ask themselves what the great race problem will lead to in the long run.

Something, perchance but very little, one may learn from the experiences of America, for there the natives were not indigenous to the soil, but imported. Moreover, their inferior numbers, averaging about one native to ten whites, have made them, if not a negligible

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quantity, at least not a future danger. To-day the South American negro, trained by generations of plantation tending, is on a far higher plane of civilisation than the South African native, reclaimed only a few years ago from utter savagery. Even in the critical days which followed the emancipation of the slaves, America never had to face the remote possibility of submergence by an incalculable horde of coloured races to whom civilisation has taught that unity alone is strength. So far, even in the Cape Colony, the remnant of tribal enmity is sufficient to prevent anything approaching homogeneity in the black population, and so long as that total incapacity for organisation and cohesion exists among them, their numerical superiority constitutes no actual danger. The educated native has, however, already realised this as the greatest weakness of his race. In a journal devoted to native interests, and called "Imvo," conducted by Tembo Jabavi, a Cape native of considerable ability and education, the policy of union for mutual advantage is constantly and consistently advocated. And in the one or two constituencies where the coloured vote influences the election, "Imvo" has already

become a power which neither candidate can afford to ignore.

Passing from the native question to those means which are at present relied on to prevent its becoming acute, one turns naturally to an examination of the various police forces. These bodies were recruited with the object of protecting the white settler from any attempt by the black races to expel him from the country. The most recent of these aggressions was the Matabele rebellion of 1896, which led to the immediate organisation of an active police force in the territory administered by the British South Africa Company. At their inception the two forces whose duty it was to defend the provinces of Matabeleland and Mashonaland were separate bodies, but since the close of the war they have, very wisely, been united.

The recent appointment of Lieutenant-Colonel Nicholson, D.S.O., to be Commander-in-Chief of the entire Rhodesian Police Forces, in the place of Sir Richard Martin, resigned, is rather a recognition of supreme services rendered to that country than a new departure in administration. For the British South Africa Company's police may be said to owe its very existence to Colonel

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Nicholson. In February, 1896, then senior Captain in the 7th Hussars, he was sent up to Matabeleland to repair, in the name of the Imperial Government, the ravages caused by Jameson's Raid. At that time a dilapidated remnant of the Bechuanaland Border Police was all that remained to protect the property of the settlers. As might be expected, the work of re-organisation was difficult and slow. It was, moreover, interrupted at its commencement by the outbreak of the Matabele War. Since the re-establishment of peace, the new force has been constituted and developed with remarkable rapidity and thoroughness, the Matabeleland division being already five hundred and forty-six strong, forming five troops. The headquarters of these are at Bulawayo, Manzinyami, Gwelo, Filabusi, and Usher, each centre furnishing three or four detachments which patrol the surrounding districts and work the inoculating stations, and at the Bulawayo depôt, where all recruits are received and trained, the officers and men number two hundred and sixty-two. As regards construction and discipline, it is a model camp. Everything is done to secure the comfort of the men, as well as their efficiency. Besides

excellent quarters, Colonel Nicholson has provided them with reading and recreation rooms, a store which is a source of financial profit to the force, and a savings-bank which, at the time of my visit, contained deposits amounting to over £4482. Out of 5*s.* a day, 1*s.* of which is deferred pay, this sum represents immense concessions to the provident spirit. The moral tone of the corps is best demonstrated by the fact that no criminal conviction has ever been recorded against any member of the force during the two and a half years of its existence—a fact of which Colonel Nicholson is justly proud. It is true that the British South Africa Police is infinitesimally recruited from the class which supplies the raw material out of which Tommy Atkins is made. Men of all ranks drift into the Rhodesian Forces. The man who opened the arsenal door to me had been an Eton boy, and bore a well-known name. Many such are there, though promotion is purely arbitrary, for merit, not rank or even seniority, is the passport to Colonel Nicholson's favour. The Mashonaland division, which will now come under his wise and energetic rule, is three hundred and seventy strong, not counting the Native Police con-

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tingent, three hundred strong, a number of which are attached to each European troop. Like the sister corps, the Mashonaland Police are divided into five troops, with headquarters at Salisbury, Abercorn, Lo Magondi, Umtali, and Victoria. Though the whole force is as yet insufficient in numbers and ammunition to give a guarantee of absolute security to the vast area of 750,000 square miles, it must be acknowledged that its high standard of efficiency goes far to supplement its inferior numbers. The British South Africa Police is, in fact, one of the few things connected with the Chartered Company which inspires untempered enthusiasm. In relation to its police, however, the company merely stands as paymaster; with their organisation or control it has had nothing to do.

A transition from the consideration of Colonel Nicholson's force to the Cape Mounted Rifles and the Cape Police might almost be described as a descent from the sublime to the ridiculous. If Mr. Schreiner's Ministry were to order a Commission of Inquiry into the administration of these two anomalous bodies, it would do much towards blotting out its scarlet sins of omission. At present these two forces are more

of a danger than a defence to the Colony. Though there is no substantial reason why they should not be amalgamated, they are twain. The difference between them is almost entirely a difference of pay ; in general capacity and total lack of organisation they are equal. The Cape Mounted Rifles, which is considered the "crack corps," is about eight hundred strong, and is under the control of the Secretary to the Defence Department of the Legislature. On the other hand, the Cape Police number about two thousand and are divided into two corps, covering two distinct districts, each of which is administered by a Commissioner, the whole force being subject to the will and pleasure of the Chief Permanent Secretary to the Law Department in Cape Town. This gentleman, a civilian by instinct as well as by trade, is pursued by constant dread lest any one should mistake his lambs for soldiers, despite the fact that they constitute the chief official defence of the Colony. This sentiment has hitherto prevented him from making up his mind as to the officers' uniform, which is at present largely left to individual discretion, with recommendations to eschew, as far as possible, a military cut.



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District No. 1 extends from King William's Town to the Orange river, its Commissioner being a Mr. Henry Davis, magistrate in that city. In this division the rate of pay is five-and-sixpence a day, no horses nor forage being provided. Mr. Macleod Robinson, of the Diamond Detective Department in Kimberley, rules over the Cape Police in District No. 2, which covers the area between the Orange river and the Bechuanaland Protectorate. The cost of living being greater than in the South, the pay in this division is as high as seven shillings a day, both horses and forage being supplied by the Government.

The similarities between the Cape Mounted Riflemen and the Cape Police, however, are more evident and more deplorable than their differences. Not only are both destitute of any supreme military authority, but they are equally without any military training whatever, though eligible for active service. If a trooper picks up any knowledge of manœuvring beyond the most elementary drill, he owes it to the goodwill of his superior officer, who is not bound to give his men any regular instruction. Indeed, with a few exceptions, the officers are almost



as ignorant as their men. It is to these facts rather than to the bellicose disposition of the Sprigg Ministry that such fiascos as the Langenburg campaign must be attributed. The inefficiency of the Cape Police and its sister corps, however, does not end there. Though entirely controlled by civilians, they are no better fitted to discharge police duties than to bear arms. No institution exists where either military tactics or the letter of the law are taught to the men whose two-fold duties necessitate a knowledge of both. Constant complaints are made in the Cape House of Assembly at the immense sums voted each session for the maintenance of these forces. They melt away no one quite knows how, and yet the men remain ignorant policemen and incapable soldiers. The lack of military training is the greater and the more important deficiency. As police the Cape Police at least are fairly satisfactory. A thorough knowledge of the country and its inhabitants to an extent supplements the want of legal knowledge, a smattering of which experience gradually teaches. What is wanted is one consistent body, organised somewhat on the lines of the Irish Constabulary, reinforced by a military contingent under an

Imperial officer such as Colonel Nicholson, and the establishment of training schools. As it is, the various volunteer corps would probably prove more useful in the field than either of the police forces; but, being chiefly composed of clerks and office boys, they are not of course available to be ordered out.

Natal is, it should be stated, in a much better case with regard to its means of defence. The Natal Mounted Police, of which Colonel Dartnell is Commandant-General, numbers about five hundred, and has reached a high standard of efficiency. There is a field contingent about one hundred and fifty strong, who receive regular military instruction and do no police work—who are soldiers, in fact, in all but name. Yet Natal, breathing tranquilly the humid perfume of her gardens, has perhaps less need of a martial corps available for war service at any moment than the Cape Colony, whose frontiers are fringed by divers elements of discord. Those who think that the Langenburg campaign was the last episode in the long struggle between the native and the colonist are sanguine. Days of reckoning may dawn elsewhere. For the credit of British supremacy it is time some-

thing were done to bring the colonial forces somewhere near the standard which Colonel Nicholson has already reached in Matabeleland.

I have come to the last subject with which I propose to deal in this final chapter—a subject vitally affecting not only the welfare of South Africa but the commercial interests of Great Britain. I refer to that combination formed by the great ship-owners for their own protection, commonly called the “South African Shipping Ring.” The object of this “corner” is to stifle competition and thus to keep up the rates of freight on imported and exported goods. In order to attain these objects the policy of the shipping ring has been to coerce the merchants into boycotting each new line of steamers as it appears, until the struggling rival is forced either to join the ring or to withdraw from the contest. The means through which this policy of coercion is carried out is the rebate system whereby formerly five per cent., and now ten per cent., of the freight dues are refunded to the merchant at a future date. In order to make the operation of this system clear I must point out that the South African Ring was constituted in 1886, and the very

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next year witnessed the inauguration of the rebate system, through the medium of a circular which announced that "a return of five per cent. on the net freight paid will be allowed from the 1st December to all shippers in steamers despatched by the undermentioned lines" (those which belong to the ring) "from the United Kingdom or the Continent. The return percentage will be computed quarterly up to the 1st of March, 1st of June, 1st of September and 1st of December in each year, and paid six months after those dates. The return will only be payable to those shippers who have, up to the date of payment, shipped exclusively by the lines as defined below." When a formidable rival in the shape of the Bucknall Line appeared, another circular was issued raising the rebate to ten per cent. to be computed every six months and not paid till nine months after date. This drastic measure had the desired effect of first frightening those merchants who had supported the new line on account of its reduced freight rates into withdrawing their support, and then compelling the Bucknall Line into the fold of the ring. Thus the system that enables the great shipping companies to

retain large sums of money belonging to the merchants which, if they ship on non-conference steamers, become forfeit, effectually prevents any attempt by the latter to protest against the extortionate scale of rates imposed by the ring.

If, indeed, the freight for the transport of British goods to South Africa was reasonable, the monopoly thus created might be regarded as the beneficent institution which Sir Donald Currie, who is its moving spirit, describes it. As a matter of fact, however, the freight rates are at least fifteen per cent. higher than those which prevail on the German and American lines conveying foreign produce to South Africa. When the German East Africa line first began to compete with the lines running from Southampton to Cape Town, they quoted very low rates, a course which the British line calling at Hamburg was soon obliged to adopt. At the same time the shipping ring maintained the high tariff at British ports, and thus a considerable amount of our transport trade drifted away to Germany. The ring, however, on finding that the German line, by offering low through-rates to ports in the Cape Colony, had begun seriously to threaten

their monopoly, determined to hold out the olive branch, and very shortly the German East Africa line had also thrown in their lot with the combination. The principal conditions of their admission to the sacred circle were that the German company agreed to charge the same rates as the British line from Hamburg, and not to accept cargoes for any port south of Durban. When, however, the ring entered into this agreement, they were cognizant of their German rival's intention to initiate a through-rate system from inland towns in Germany. This project they have since carried out, with the astonishing result that it is cheaper for the British trader to send his goods from London to the middle of Germany and have them conveyed thence over German railways and on German ships to South Africa than to ship them direct from Southampton to the Cape! In his valuable pamphlet wherein he exposes the injury done to British trade by the shipping ring tactics, Mr. H. H. Clark quotes many actual cases to prove how the difference in freight rates has benefited Germany at our expense. One illustration will, however, demonstrate the truth of his contention. Six cases of furniture conveyed from Tetschen

in Austria to Hamburg (about 300 miles) were shipped thence by the German line to Delagoa Bay at a total cost of £6 11s. The British freight from Hamburg alone would amount to £9 5s. 5*d.* It is true that in order to assist German enterprise the Government gives a subsidy of £45,000 per annum to the East Coast line. But as £25,000 of this sum goes in Suez Canal dues, this subsidy bears no comparison to the enormous grant made by the Cape Government to the Castle and Union lines, who have no canal dues to meet. And it may further be remarked that on the American line the rates are even lower than the German through tariff. Under these circumstances, is it any wonder that our import trade with South Africa is diminishing year by year?

No unprejudiced person can deny the pernicious effects of this monopoly, yet when the question of granting the new mail contract came up for discussion in the Cape Assembly a few months ago, not the slightest effort was made to secure either a reduction of the rates or the abolition of the rebate system.

In 1893 the Cape Government first contracted to pay an annual subsidy of £88,000



with a yearly increase of £500, which brought it this year to £94,000, for the carriage of the mails by the Union and Castle lines who, between them, control the shipping ring. Under the new agreement just entered into, the subsidy was raised to £135,000, which sum includes Natal's contribution. This is at the rate of £2600 per outward and homeward voyage prevailing throughout the ten years' currency of the contract. The only consideration for raising the subsidy was a slightly accelerated service. Natal did, indeed, protest against the iniquity of the Conference system, but her stake is so small that the recommendation of her Government, urging that the lowering of the freight dues should be made a condition of renewal, had no effect upon the result. The indifference of the Cape may be partially explained by the fact that a large proportion of the Union and Castle shares are held in the Colony, which is, therefore, more interested in the maintenance than in the destruction of the "corner." Beyond throwing the contract open to public tender—a mere farce in view of the ring's suppression of competition—the present Cape Government is unlikely to advocate a



change which might prove their patriotism at the expense of their pockets.

The high cost of living in South Africa, which to a great extent stems the tide of immigration, is only another and natural consequence of the high rates of transport. Nor are these charges confined to the import trade. The freight rates for exported goods are equally exorbitant, and have in several cases—the wattle industry of Natal, for example,—nearly destroyed a promising enterprise. One argument advanced by supporters of the ring is that the rates for shipping goods from England are regulated by the fact of the export trade being so small that the boats are almost empty on the homeward voyage. But there is little doubt that the quotation of moderate export rates would do more to encourage the growth of South African industries, agricultural and manufacturing, than anything else could do. Various attempts have been made by Mr. Clark and the South African Mercantile Association to rouse the Imperial Government to take some steps to rescue the British merchant from the thralldom of this monopoly, and, incidentally, to prevent the further diminution of the import.

trade between Great Britain and South Africa. Up to the present, however, their endeavours have been in vain. The predominance of the shipowners in the councils of the South African Merchants' Committee entirely discounts the utility of that weak, if well-meaning, society.

With regard to the passenger traffic between Europe and Africa, I can testify personally to the immense superiority of the German East Africa Company's ships over those belonging to the Castle and Union lines. The accommodation is infinitely better on the German than on the English boats; so is the service, and, above all, the food. As the ship on which I went to Africa, and the ship on which I returned therefrom, were both the newest boats in the fleet of either company, the comparison I institute is a fair one. In point of price the advantage is equally with Germany, the East Coast service working out at an average of £1 per day, while the journey from Southampton to Capetown costs over £2 per day. Only in speed do the English boats beat their rivals, and they are not likely to retain that superiority long, as the ships now in process of construction for the German East African service will have a going

capacity of fifteen knots, which should enable them to do the journey from Naples to Johannesburg in eighteen days, twenty-one hours. This estimate includes a stay of two hours at all the ports now visited by the ten-knot boats, and a respite of twelve hours to take in water at Dar-es-Salaam. When these new boats are afloat, many travellers to and from the Rand will, doubtless, choose the lovely East Coast route in preference to the monotonous voyage through the Atlantic now selected because it is so much quicker. Indeed, many things in Africa, besides the shipping point to the gradual encroachment of Germany and, in a lesser degree, of America, upon a domain which we have been wont to regard as commercially our own. Whatever may be the outcome of our struggles with the Dutch element in South Africa, it must not be forgotten that our trade—that mainspring of our prosperity—is being threatened as well as our political paramountcy, and from quite a different quarter. And although the wars of contending commercial interests are bloodless, they are long. If their victories contribute more to the strength and felicity of a people than the mere acquisition of

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territory, it is also true that defeat means sure if slow extinction. A country lost can be reconquered by the sword, but a trade preserve invaded always becomes a common highway, whereon a bare foothold may only remain for them who formerly fared thereon alone.

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